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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. AINSWORTH begs it to be distinctly understood that no Contributions whatever sent him, either for the NEW MONTHLY or AINSWORTH'S MAGAZINES, will be returned. All articles are sent at the risk of the writers, who should invariably keep copies.



THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

BOOK THE FIRST.—ALIZON DEVICE.

CHAPTER I. ▶

THE MAY QUEEN.

ON a May-day, in the early part of the seventeenth century, and a most lovely May-day too, admirably adapted to usher in the merriest month of the year, and seemingly made expressly for the occasion, a wake was held at Whalley, to which all the neighbouring country folk resorted, and, indeed, many of the gentry as well, for in the good old times, when England was still Merry England, a wake had attraction for all classes alike, and especially in Lancashire; for, with pride I speak it, there were no lads, who in running, vaulting, wrestling, dancing, or in any other manly exercise, could compare with the Lancashire lads. In archery, above all, none could match them; for were not their ancestors the stout bowmen and billmen whose cloth-yard shafts and trenchant weapons won the day at Flodden? And were they not true sons of their fathers? And then, I speak it with yet greater pride, there were few, if any, lasses who could compare in comeliness with the rosy-cheeked, dark-haired, bright-eyed lasses of Lancashire.

Assemblages of this kind, therefore, where the best specimens of either sex were to be met with, were sure to be well attended, and in spite of an enactment passed in the preceding reign of Elizabeth, prohibiting “piping, playing, bear-baiting, and bull-baiting on the Sabbath-days, or on any other days, and also superstitious ringing of bells, wakes, and common feasts,” they were not only not interfered with, but rather encouraged by the higher orders. Indeed, it was well known that the reigning monarch, James the First, inclined the other way, and, desirous of checking the growing spirit of Puritanism throughout the kingdom, had openly expressed himself in favour of honest recreation after evening prayers and upon holidays; and, furthermore, had declared that he liked well the spirit of his good subjects in Lancashire, and would not see them punished for indulging in lawful exercises, but that ere long he would pay them a visit in one of his progresses, and judge for himself, and if he found all things as they had been represented to him, he would grant them still further licence. Meanwhile, this expression of the royal

opinion removed every restriction, and old sports and pastimes, May games, Whitsun-ales, and morris-dances, with rush-bearings, bell-ringings, wakes, and feasts, were as much practised as before the passing of the obnoxious enactment of Elizabeth. The Puritans and Precians disengaged them, it is true, as much as ever, and would have put them down if they could, as savouring of papistry and idolatry, and some rigid divines thundered against them from the pulpit; but with the king and the authorities in their favour, the people little heeded these denunciations against them, and abstained not from any "honest recreation" whenever a holiday occurred.

If Lancashire was famous for wakes, the wakes of Whalley were famous even in Lancashire. The men of the district were in general a hardy, handsome race, of the genuine Saxon breed, and passionately fond of all kinds of pastime, and the women had their full share of the beauty indigenous to the soil. Besides, it was a secluded spot, in the heart of a wild mountainous region, and though occasionally visited by travellers journeying northward, or by others coming from the opposite direction, retained a primitive simplicity of manners, and a great partiality for old customs and habits.

The natural beauties of the place, contrasted with the dreary region around it, and heightened by the picturesque ruins of the ancient abbey, part of which, namely, the old abbot's lodgings, had been converted into a residence by the Asshetons, and was now occupied by Sir Ralph Assheton, while the other was left to the ravages of time, made it always an object of attraction to those residing near it; but when, on the May-day in question, there was not only to be a wake, but a maypole set on the green, and a rush-bearing, with morris-dancers besides, together with Whitsun-ale at the abbey, crowds flocked to Whalley from Wiswall, Cold Coates, and Clithero, from Ribchester and Blackburn, from Padiham and Pendle, and even from places more remote. Not only was John Lawe's of the Dragon full, but the Chequers, and the Swan also, and the roadside ale-house to boot. Sir Ralph Assheton had several guests at the abbey, and others were expected in the course of the day, while Doctor Ormerod had friends staying with him at the vicarage.

Soon after midnight, on the morning of the festival, many young persons of the village, of both sexes, had arisen, and, to the sound of horn, had repaired to the neighbouring woods, and there gathered a vast stock of green boughs and flowering branches of the sweetly-perfumed hawthorn, wild roses, and honeysuckle, with baskets of violets, cowslips, primroses, blue-bells, and other wild flowers, and returning in the same order they went forth, fashioned the branches into green bowers within the churchyard, or round about the maypole, set up on the green, and decorated them afterwards with garlands and crowns of flowers. This morning ceremonial ought to have been performed without wetting the feet; but, though some pains were taken in the matter, few could achieve the difficult task, except those carried over the dewy grass by their lusty swains. On the day before the rushes had been gathered, and the rush-cart piled, shaped, trimmed, and adorned by those experienced in the task (and it was one requiring both taste and skill, as will be seen when the cart itself shall come forth), while others had borrowed for its adornment, from the abbey and elsewhere, silver tankards, drinking cups,

spoons, ladles, brooches, watches, chains, and bracelets, so as to make an imposing show.

Day was ushered in by a merry peal of bells from the tower of the old parish church, and the ringers practised all kinds of joyous changes during the morning, and fired many a clanging volley. The whole village was early astir; and as these were times when good hours were kept; and as early rising is a famous sharpener of the appetite, especially when attended with exercise, so an hour before noon the rustics one and all sat down to dinner, the strangers being entertained by their friends, and if they had no friends, throwing themselves upon the general hospitality. The ale-houses were reserved for tippling at a later hour, for it was then customary for both gentleman and commoner, male as well as female, as will be more fully shown hereafter, to take their meals at home, and repair afterwards to houses of public entertainment for wine or other liquors. Private chambers were, of course, reserved for the gentry; but not unfrequently the squire and his friends would take their bottle with the other guests. Such was the invariable practice in the northern counties in the reign of James the First.

Soon after mid-day, and when the bells began to peal merrily again (for even ringers must recruit themselves), in a small cottage in the outskirts of the village, and close to the Calder, whose waters swept past the trimly-kept garden attached to it, two young girls were employed in attiring a third, who was to represent Maid Marian, or Queen of May, in the pageant then about to ensue. And, certainly, by sovereign and prescriptive right of beauty, no one better deserved the high title and distinction conferred upon her than this fair girl. Lovelier maiden in the whole county, and however high her degree, than this rustic damsels, it was impossible to find; and though the becoming and fanciful costume in which she was decked could not heighten her natural charms, it certainly displayed them to advantage. Upon her smooth and beautiful brow sat a gilt crown, while her dark and luxuriant hair, covered behind with a scarlet coif, embroidered with gold, and tied with yellow, white, and crimson ribands, but otherwise wholly unconfined, swept down almost to the ground. Slight and fragile, her figure was of such just proportion that every movement and gesture had an indescribable charm. The most courtly dame might have envied her fine and taper fingers, and fancied she could improve them by protecting them against the sun, or by rendering them snowy white with paste or cosmetic; but this was questionable: nothing certainly could improve the small foot and finely-turned ankle, so well displayed in the red hose and smart little yellow buskin, fringed with gold. A stomacher of scarlet cloth, braided with yellow lace in cross bars, confined her slender waist. Her robe was of carnation-coloured silk, with wide sleeves, and the gold-fringed skirt descended only a little below the knee, like the dress of a modern Swiss peasant, so as to reveal the exquisite symmetry of her limbs. Over all she wore a surcoat of azure silk, lined with white and edged with gold. In her left hand she held a red pink as an emblem of the season. So enchanting was her appearance altogether, so fresh the character of her beauty, so bright the bloom that dyed her lovely cheeks, that she might have been taken for a personification of May herself. She was indeed in the very May of life—the mingling of spring and summer in womanhood; and the tender blue eyes, bright and clear as diamonds of purest water, the

soft regular features, and the merry mouth, whose ruddy parted lips ever and anon displayed two rows of pearls, completed the similitude to the attributes of the jocund month.

Her handmaidens, both of whom were simple girls, and though not destitute of some pretensions to beauty themselves, in nowise to be compared with her, were at the moment employed in knotting the ribands in her hair, and adjusting the azure surcoat.

Attentively watching these proceedings sat on a stool, placed in a corner, a little girl, some nine or ten years old, with a basket of flowers on her knee. The child was very diminutive, even for her age, and her smallness was increased by personal deformity, occasioned by contraction of the chest, and spinal curvature, which raised her back above her shoulders; but her features were sharp and cunning, indeed almost malignant; and there was a singular and unpleasant look about the eyes, which were not placed evenly in the head. Altogether she had a strange old-fashioned look, and from her habitual bitterness of speech, as well as from her vindictive character, which, young as she was, had been displayed, with some effect, on more than one occasion, she was no great favourite with any one. It was curious now to watch the eager and envious interest she took in the progress of her sister's adornment—for such was the degree of relationship in which she stood to the May Queen—and when the surcoat was finally adjusted, and the last riband tied, she broke forth, having hitherto preserved a sullen silence.

"Weel, sister Alizon, ye may a farrently May Queen, ey mun say," she observed, spitefully, "but to my mind other Suky Worseley or Nancy Holt, here, would ha' look'd pröttier."

"Nah, nah, that we shoulna," rejoined one of the damsels referred to; "there is na a lass i' Lancashire to hold a candle near Alizon Device."

"Fie upon ye, for an ill-favort minx, Jennet," cried Nancy Holt; "ye're jealous o' your pretty sister."

"Ey jealous," cried Jennet, reddening, "an whoy the stirrups should ey be jealous, ey, thou saucy jade! Whon ey grow older ey'st may a pröttier May Queen than onny on you, and so the lads aw tell me."

"And so you will, Jennet," said Alizon Device, checking, by a gentle look, the jeering laugh in which Nancy seemed disposed to indulge—"so you will, my pretty little sister," she added, kissing her; "and I will tire you as well and as carefully as Susan and Nancy have just 'tired me."

"Mayhap ey shanna live till then," rejoined Jennet, peevishly, "and when ey'm dead an gone, an laid it' cowld churchyard, yo an they win be sorry fo having werreted me so."

"I have never intentionally vexed you, Jennet, love," said Alizon; "and I am sure these two girls love you dearly."

"Eigh, we may allowance fo her feaw tempers," observed Susan Worseley; "fo we knoa that ailments an deformities are sure to may folk fretful."

"Eigh, there it is," cried Jennet, sharply. "My high shoulthers an sma size are always thrown i' my feace. Boh ey'st grow tall i' time, an get straight—eigh straighter than yo, Suky, wi your broad back an short neck—boh if ey dunna, whot matters it? Ey shall be feared at onny rate—ay, feared, wenchess, by ye both."

"Nah doubt on't, theaw little good-fa'-nothin piece o' mischief," muttered Susan.

"Whot's that yo sayn, Suky?" cried Jennet, whose quick ears had caught the words. "Tak care whot ye do to offend me, lass," she added, shaking her thin fingers armed with talon-like claws threateningly at her, "or ey'll ask my granddame, Mother Demdike, to quieten ye."

At the mention of this name a sudden shade came over Susan's countenance. Changing colour and slightly trembling, she turned away from the child, who, noticing the effect of her threat, could not repress her triumph. But again Alizon interposed.

"Do not be alarmed, Susan," she said, "my grandmother will never harm you, I am sure; indeed, she will never harm any one; and do not heed what little Jennet says, for she is not aware of the effect of her own words, or of the injury they might do our grandmother, if repeated."

"Ey dunna wish to repeat them, or to think of 'em," sobbed Susan.

"That's good, that's kind of you, Susan," replied Alizon, taking her hand. "Do not be cross any more, Jennet. You see you have made her weep."

"Ey'm glad on it," rejoined the little girl, laughing; "let her cry on. It'll do her good, an teach her to mend her manners, and nah offend me again."

"Ey didna mean to offend ye, Jennet," sobbed Susan, "boh yo're so wrythen an marr'd, a body canna speak to please ye."

"Weel, if ye confess your fault, ey'm satisfied," replied the little girl; "boh let it be a lesson to ye, Suky, to keep guard o' your tongue i' future."

"It shall, ey promise ye," replied Susan, drying her eyes.

At this moment a door opened, and a woman entered from an inner room, having a high-crowned, conical-shaped hat on her head, and broad white pinnings over her cheeks. Her dress was of dark red camlet, with high-heeled shoes. She stooped slightly, and being rather lame, supported herself on a crutch-handled stick. In age she might be between forty and fifty, but she looked much older, and her features were not at all prepossessing from a hooked nose and chin, while their sinister effect was increased by a formation of the eyes similar to that in Jennet, only more strongly noticeable in her case. This woman was Elizabeth Device, widow of John Device, about whose death there was a mystery to be inquired into hereafter, and mother of Alizon and Jennet, though how she came to have a daughter so unlike herself in all respects as the former, no one could conceive; but so it was.

"Soh, ye ha donned your finery at last, Alizon," said Elizabeth. "Your brother Jem has just run up to say that t' rush-cart has set out, and that Robin Hood an his merry men are comin' for their Queen."

"And their Queen is quite ready for them," replied Alizon, moving towards the door.

"Neigh, let's ha' a look at ye fust, wench," cried Elizabeth, staying her; "fine iitthers may fine brid's—ey warrant me, now yo'n getten these May gewgaws on, yo fancy yourself a queen in arnest."

"A queen of a day, mother,—a queen of a little village festival,—nothing more," replied Alizon. "Oh, if I were a queen in right earnest, or even a great lady——"

"What would yo do?" demanded Elizabeth Device, sourly.

"I'd make you rich, mother, and build you a grand house to live in,"

replied Alizon, "much grander than Browsholme, or Downham, or Middleton."

"Pity yo're nah a queen, then, Alizon," replied Elizabeth, relaxing her harsh features into a wintry smile.

"Whot would ye do fo me, Alizon, if ye were a queen?" asked little Jennet, looking up at her.

"Why, let me see," was the reply; "I'd indulge every one of your whims and wishes. You should only need ask to have."

"Poh—poh—yo'd never content her," observed Elizabeth, testily.

"It's nah your way to try an content me, mother, even whon ye might," rejoined Jennet, who, if she loved few people, loved her mother least of all, and never lost an opportunity of testifying her dislike to her.

"Awt o'pontee, little wasp," cried her mother; "theaw desarves novt boh whot theaw dustna get ofken enough—a good whipping."

"Yo hanna towd us whot yo'd do fo yurself if yo war a great lady, Alizon?" interposed Susan.

"Oh, I haven't thought about myself," replied the other, laughing.

"Ey con tell ye what she'd do, Suky," replied little Jennet, knowingly; "she'd marry Master Richard Assheton, o' Middleton."

"Jennet!" exclaimed Alizon, blushing crimson.

"It's true," replied the little girl, "ye knoa ye would, Alizon. Look at her face," she added, with a screaming laugh.

"Howd te tongue, little plague," cried Elizabeth, rapping her knuckles with her stick, "and behave thyself, or theaw shanna go out to t' wake."

Jennet dealt her mother a bitterly vindictive look, but she neither uttered cry, nor made remark.

In the momentary silence that ensued the blithe jingling of bells was heard, accompanied by the merry sound of tabor and pipe.

"Ah! here come the rush-cart and the morris-dancers," cried Alizon, rushing joyously to the window, which, being left partly open, admitted the scent of the woodbine and eglantine by which it was overgrown, as well as the humming sound of the bees by which the flowers were invaded.

Almost immediately afterwards a frolic troop, like a band of masquers, approached the cottage, and drew up before it, while the jingling of bells ceasing at the same moment, told that the rush-cart had stopped likewise. Chief amongst the party was Robin Hood, clad in a suit of Lincoln green, with a sheaf of arrows at his back, a bugle dangling from his baldric, a bow in his hand, and a broad-leaved green hat on his head, looped up on one side, and decorated with a heron's feather. The hero of Sherwood was personated by a tall, well-limbed fellow, to whom, being really a forester of Bowland, the character was natural. Beside him stood a very different figure, a jovial friar, with shaven crown, rubicund cheeks, bull throat, and mighty paunch, covered by a russet habit, and girded in by a red cord, decorated with golden twist and tassel. He wore red hose and sandal shoon, and carried in his girdle a wallet, to contain a roast capon, a neat's tongue, or any other dainty given him. Friar Tuck, for such he was, found his representative in Ned Huddlestane, porter at the abbey, who, as the largest and stoutest man in the village, was chosen on that account to the part. Next to him came a character of no little importance, and upon whom much of the mirth of the pageant depended, and this devolved upon the village cobbler, Jack Roby, a dapper little

fellow, who fitted the part of the Fool to a nicety. With bauble in hand, and blue coxcomb hood adorned with long white ass's ears on head, with jerkin of green, striped with yellow; hose of different colours, the left leg being yellow, with a red pantoufle, and the right blue, terminated with a yellow shoe; with bells hung upon various parts of his motley attire, so that he could not move without producing a jingling sound, Jack Roby looked wonderful indeed; and was constantly dancing about, and dealing a blow with his bauble. Next came Will Scarlet, Stukeley, and Little John, all proper men and tall, attired in Lincoln green, like Robin Hood, and similarly equipped. Like him, too, they were all foresters of Bowland, owning service to the bow-bearer, Mr. Parker, of Browsholme Hall, and the representative of Little John, who was six feet and a half high, and stout in proportion, was Lawrence Blackrod, Mr. Parker's head keeper. After the foresters came Tom the Piper, a wandering minstrel, habited for the occasion in a blue doublet, with sleeves of the same colour, turned up with yellow, red hose, and brown buskins, red bonnet, and green surcoat lined with yellow. Beside the piper was another minstrel, similarly attired, and provided with a tabor. Lastly came one of the main features of the pageant, and which, together with the Fool, contributed most materially to the amusement of the spectators. This was the Hobby Horse. The hue of this spirited charger was a pinkish white, and his housings were of crimson cloth hanging to the ground, so as to conceal the rider's real legs, though a pair of sham ones dangled at the side. His bit was of gold, and his bridle red morocco leather, while his rider was very sumptuously arrayed in a purple mantle, bordered with gold, with a rich cap of the same regal hue on his head, encircled with gold, and having a red feather stuck in it. The hobby-horse had a plume of nodding feathers on his head, and careered from side to side, now rearing in front, now kicking behind, now prancing, now gently ambling, and in short indulging in playful fancies and vagaries, such as horse never indulged in before, to the imminent danger, it seemed, of his rider, and to the huge delight of the beholders. Nor must it be omitted, as it was a matter of great wonderment to the lookers-on, that by some legerdemain contrivance the rider of the hobby-horse had a couple of daggers stuck in his cheeks, while from his steed's bridle hung a silver ladle, which he held now and then to the crowd, and in which, when he did so, a few coins were sure to rattle. After the hobby-horse came the maypole, not the tall pole so called, and which was already planted in the green, but a stout staff elevated some six feet above the head of the bearer, with a coronal of flowers atop, and four long garlands hanging down, each held by a morris-dancer. Then came the May Queen's gentleman-usher, a fantastic personage in habiliments of blue guarded with white, and holding a long willow wand in his hand. After the usher came the main troop of morris-dancers—the men attired in a graceful costume, which set off their light active figures to advantage, consisting of a slashed jerkin of black and white velvet, with cut sleeves left open so as to reveal the snowy shirt beneath, white hose, and shoes of black Spanish leather with large roses. Ribands were everywhere in their dresses—ribands and tinsel adorned their caps, ribands crossed their hose, and ribands were tied round their arms. In either hand they held a long white handkerchief knotted with ribands. The female morris-dancers were habited in white, decorated

like the dresses of the men ; they had ribands and wreaths of flowers round their heads, bows in their hair, and in their hands long white knotted kerchiefs.

In the rear of the performers in the pageant came the rush-cart, drawn by a team of eight stout horses, with their manes and tails tied with ribands, their collars fringed with red and yellow worsted, and hung with bells, which jingled blithely at every movement, and their heads decked with flowers. The cart itself consisted of an enormous pile of rushes, banded and twisted together, rising to a considerable height, and terminated in a sharp ridge, like the point of a Gothic window. The sides and top were decorated with flowers and ribands, and there were eaves in front and at the back, and on the space within them, which was covered with white paper, were strings of gaudy flowers, embedded in moss, amongst which were suspended all the ornaments and finery that could be collected for the occasion : to wit, flagons of silver, spoons, ladles, chains, watches, and bracelets, so as to make a brave and resplendent show. The wonder was, how articles of so much value would be trusted forth on such an occasion ; but nothing was ever lost. On the top of the rush-cart, and bestriding its sharp ridges, sat half a dozen men, habited somewhat like the morris-dancers, in garments bedecked with tinsel and ribands, holding garlands formed by hoops, decorated with flowers, and attached to poles ornamented with silver paper, cut into various figures and devices, and diminishing gradually in size as they rose to a point, where they were crowned with wreaths of daffodils.

A large crowd of rustics, of all ages, accompanied the morris-dancers and rush-cart.

This gay troop having come to a halt, as described, before the cottage, the gentleman-usher entered it, and tapping against the inner door with his wand, took off his cap as soon as it was opened, and bowing deferentially to the ground, said he was come to invite the Queen of May to join the pageant, and that it only awaited her presence to proceed to the green. Having delivered this speech in as good set phrase as he could command, and being the parish clerk and schoolmaster to boot, Sanipson Harrop by name, he was somewhat more polished than the rest of the hinds ; and having, moreover, received a gracious response from the May Queen, who condescendingly replied that she was quite ready to accompany him, he took her hand, and led her ceremoniously to the door, whither they were followed by the others.

Loud was the shout that greeted Alizon's appearance, and tremendous was the pushing to obtain a sight of her ; and so much was she abashed by the enthusiastic greeting, which was wholly unexpected on her part, that she would have drawn back again, if it had been possible ; but the usher led her forward, and Robin Hood and the foresters having bent the knee before her, the hobby-horse began to curvet anew among the spectators, and tread on their toes, the fool to rap their knuckles with his bauble, the piper to play, the taborer to beat his tambourine, and the morris-dancers to toss their kerchiefs over their heads. Thus the pageant being put in motion, the rush-cart began to roll on, its horses' bells jingling merrily, and the spectators cheering lustily.

CHAPTER II.

THE BLACK CAT AND THE WHITE DOVE.

LITTLE Jennet watched her sister's triumphant departure with a look in which there was far more of envy than sympathy, and when her mother took her hand to lead her forth she would not go, but saying she did not care for any such idle sights, went back sullenly to the inner room. When there, however, she could not help peeping through the window, and saw Susan and Nancy join the revel rout, with feelings of increased bitterness.

"Ey wish it would rain an spilo the finery," she said, sitting down on her stool, and plucking the flowers from her basket in pieces. "An yet, why canna ey enjoy such seets like other folk? Truth is, ey've nah heart for it."

"Folks say," she continued, after a pause, "that grandmother Demdike is a witch, an con do os she pleases. Ey wonder if she made Alizon so protty. Nah, that canna be, fo' Alizon's na favourite o' hern. If she loves onny one, it's me. Why dunna she make me good-looking, then? They say it's sinfu' to be a witch—if so, how cum grandmither Demdike to be one? Boh ey'n observed that those folk os caws her witch are afraid on her, so it may be pure spite o' their pert."

As she thus mused, a great black cat belonging to her mother, which had followed her into the room, rubbed himself against her, putting up his back, and purring loudly.

"Ah, Tib," said the little girl, "how are ye, Tib? Ey didna knoa ye were here. Lemme ask ye some questions, Tib?"

The cat mewed, looked up, and fixed his great yellow eyes upon her.

"One 'ud think ye onderstud whot wos said to ye, Tib," pursued little Jennet. "We'n see whot ye say to this! Shan ey ever be Queen o' May, like sister Alizon?"

The cat mewed in a manner that the little girl found no difficulty in interpreting the reply into "No."

"How's that, Tib?" cried Jennet, sharply. "If ey thought ye meant it, ey'd beat ye, sirrah. Answer me another question, ye saucy knave. Who will be luckiest, Alizon or me?"

This time the cat darted away from her, and made two or three skirmishes round the room, as if gone suddenly mad.

"Ey con may nowt o' that," observed Jennet, laughing.

All at once the cat bounded upon the chimney board, over which was placed a sampler, worked with the name "ALIZON."

"Why, Tib really seems to understand me, ey declare," observed Jennet, uneasily. "Ey should like to ask him a few more questions, if ey durst," she added, regarding with some distrust the animal, who now returned, and began rubbing against her as before. "Tib—Tib!"

The cat looked up, and mewed.

"Protty Tib—sweet Tib," continued the little girl, coaxingly. "Whot mun one do to be a witch like grandmother Demdike?"

The cat again dashed twice or thrice madly round the room, and then stopping suddenly at the hearth, sprang up the chimney.

"Ey'n frightened ye away ot onny rate," observed Jennet, laughing. "And yet it may mean summot," she added, reflecting a little, "fo' ey'n

heerd say os how witches fly up chimleys o' broomsticks to attend their sabbaths. Ey should like to fly i' that manner, an change myself into another shape—onny shape boh my own. Oh that ey could be os protty os Alizou! Ey dunna knoa whot ey'd nah do to be like her!"

Again the great black cat was beside her, rubbing against her, and purring. The child was a good deal startled, for she had not seen him return, and the door was shut, though he might have come in through the open window, only she had been looking that way all the time, and had never noticed him. Strange!

"Tib," said the child, patting him, "thou hasna answered my last question—how is one to become a witch?"

As she made this inquiry the cat suddenly scratched her in the arm, so that the blood came. The little girl was a good deal frightened, as well as hurt, and withdrawing her arm quickly, made a motion of striking the animal. But starting backwards, erecting his tail, and spitting, the cat assumed such a formidable appearance, that she did not dare to touch him, and she then perceived that some drops of blood stained her white sleeve, giving the spots a certain resemblance to the letters J. and D., her own initials.

At this moment, when she was about to scream for help, though she knew no one was in the house, all having gone away with the May-day revellers, a small white dove flew in at the open window, and skimming round the room, alighted near her. No sooner had the cat caught sight of this beautiful bird, than instead of preparing to pounce upon it, as might have been expected, he instantly abandoned his fierce attitude, and uttering a sort of howl, sprang up the chimney as before. But the child scarcely observed this, her attention being directed towards the bird, whose extreme beauty delighted her. It seemed quite tame too, and allowed itself to be touched, and even drawn towards her, without an effort to escape. Never, surely, was seen so beautiful a bird—with such milk-white feathers, such red legs, and such pretty yellow eyes, with crimson circles round them! So thought the little girl, as she gazed at it, and pressed it to her bosom. In doing this, gentle and good thoughts came upon her, and she reflected what a nice present this pretty bird would make to her sister Alizou on her return from the merry-making, and how pleased she should feel to give it to her. And then she thought of Alizou's constant kindness to her, and half reproached herself with the poor return she made for it, wondering she could entertain any feelings of envy towards one so good and amiable. All this while the dove nestled in her bosom.

While thus pondering, the little girl felt an unaccountable drowsiness steal over her, and presently afterwards dropped asleep, when she had a very strange dream. It seemed to her that there was a contest going on between two spirits, a good one and a bad—the bad one being represented by the great black cat, and the good spirit by the white dove. What they were striving about she could not exactly tell, but she felt that the conflict had some relation to herself. The dove at first appeared to have but a poor chance against the claws of its sable adversary, but the sharp talons of the latter made no impression upon the white plumage of the bird, which now shone like silver armour, and in the end the cat fled, yelling as it darted off—"Thou art victorious now, but her soul shall yet be mine."

Something awakened the little sleeper at the same moment, and she felt very much terrified at her dream, as she could not help thinking her own soul might be the one in jeopardy, and her first impulse was to see whether the white dove was safe. Yes, there it was still nestling in her bosom, with its head under its wing.

Just then she was startled at hearing her own name pronounced by a hoarse voice, and looking up she beheld a tall young man standing at the window. He had a somewhat gipsy look, having a dark olive complexion, and fine black eyes, though set strangely in his head, like those of Jennet and her mother, coal-black hair, and very prominent features, of a sullen and almost savage cast. His figure was gaunt but very muscular, his arms being extremely long, and his hands unusually large and bony—personal advantages which made him a formidable antagonist in any rustic encounter, and in such he was frequently engaged, being of a very irascible temper and turbulent disposition. He was clad in a holiday suit of dark green serge, which fitted him well, and carried a nosegay in one hand and a stout blackthorn cudgel in the other. This young man was James Device, son of Elizabeth, and some four or five years older than Alizon. He did not live with his mother in Whalley, but in Pendle Forest, near his old relative, Mother Demdike, and had come over that morning to attend the wake.

"Whot are ye abowt, Jennet?" inquired James Device, in tones naturally hoarse and deep, and which he took as little pains to soften, as he did to polish his manners, which were more than ordinarily rude and churlish.

"Whot are ye abowt, eysey, wench?" he repeated. "Why dunna ye go to t' green to see the morris-dancers foot it round t' maypow? Cum along wi' me."

"Ey dunna want to go, Jem," replied the little girl.

"Boh yo shan go, ey tell ye," rejoined her brother; "ye shan see your sister dawnee. Ye con sit a whoa monny day; boh May-day curfis ony wonst a year, an Alizon winna be Queen twice i' her life. Soh cum along wi' me, dereckly, or ey'n may ye."

"Ey should like to see Alizon dance, an so ey win go wi' ye, Jem," replied Jennet, getting up, "otherwise your orders shouldna may me stir, ey con tell ye."

As she came out, she found her brother whistling the blithe air of "Green Sleeves," cutting strange capers, in imitation of the morris-dancers, and whirling his cudgel over his head instead of a kerchief. The gaiety of the day seemed infectious, and to have seized even him. People stared to see Black Jem, or Surly Jem, as he was indifferently called, so joyous, and wondered what it could mean. He then fell to singing a snatch of a local ballad at that time in vogue in the neighbourhood:—

"If thou wi' nah my secret tell,
Ne bruit abroad i' Whalley parish,
An swear to keep my counsel well,
Ey win declare my day of marriage."

"Cum along, lass," he cried, stopping suddenly in his song, and snatching his sister's hand. "What han ye getten there, lapped up i' your kirtle, eh?"

"A white dove," replied Jennet, determined not to tell him anything about her strange dream.

"A white dove!" echoed Jem. "Gi' it me, an ey'n wring its neck, an get it roasted for supper."

"Ye shah do nah such thing, Jem," replied Jennet. "Ey mean to gi' it to Alizon."

"Weel, weel, that's reet," rejoined Jem, blandly, "it'll may a protty offering. Let's look at it."

"Nah, nah," said Jennet, pressing the bird gently to her bosom, "neaw one shau see it efore Alizon."

"Cum along, then," cried Jem, rather testily, and mending his pace, "or we'st be too late fo' t' round. Whoy yo'n scrattted yourself," he added, noticing the red spots on her sleeve.

"Han ey?" she rejoined, evasively. "Oh, now ey rekileet it wos Tib did it."

"Tib!" echoed Jem, gravely, and glancing uneasily at the marks.

Meanwhile, on quitting the cottage, the May-day revellers had proceeded slowly towards the green, increasing the number of their followers at each little tenement they passed, and being welcomed everywhere with shouts and cheers. The hobby-horse curvettet and capered; the Fool fleered at the girls, and flouted the men, jesting with every one, and when failing in a point rapping the knuckles of his auditors; Friar Tuck chucked the pretty girls under the chin, in defiance of their sweethearts, and stole a kiss from every buxom dame that stood in his way, and then snapped his fingers, or made a broad grimace at the husband; the piper played, and the taborer rattled his tambourine; the morris-dancers tossed their kerchiefs aloft; and the bells of the rush-cart jingled merrily; the men on the top being on a level with the roofs of the cottages, and the summits of the haystacks they passed, but in spite of their exalted position jesting with the crowd below. But in spite of these multiplied attractions, and in spite of the gambols of Fool and Horse, though the latter elicited prodigious laughter, the main attention was fixed on the May Queen, who tripped lightly along by the side of her faithful squire, Robin Hood, followcd by the three bold foresters of Sherwood, and her usher.

In this way they reached the green, where already a large crowd was collected to see them, and where in the midst of it, and above the heads of the assemblage, rose the lofty maypole, with all its flowery garlands glittering in the sunshine, and its ribands fluttering in the breeze. Pleasant was it to see those cheerful groups, composed of happy rustics, youths in their holiday attire, and maidens neatly habited too, and fresh and bright as the day itself. Summer sunshine sparkled in their eyes, and weather and circumstance as well as genial natures disposed them to enjoyment. Every lass above eighteen had her sweetheart, and old couples nodded and smiled at each other when any tender speech, broadly conveyed but tenderly conceived, reached their ears, and said it recalled the days of their youth. Pleasant was it to hear such honest laughter, and such good homely jests.

Laugh on, my merry lads, you are made of good old English stuff, loyal to church and king, and while you, and such as you, last, our land will be in no danger from foreign foe! Laugh on, and praise your sweethearts how you will. Laugh on, and blessings on your honest hearts!

The frolic train had just reached the precincts of the green, when the usher waving his wand aloft, called a momentary halt, announcing that Sir Ralph Assheton and the gentry were coming forth from the abbey gate to meet them.

A MIDNIGHT DRIVE.

BY CORNELIUS COLVILLE.

I WAS sitting one night in the general coach-office in the town of —, reflecting upon the mutability of human affairs, and taking a retrospective glance at those times when I held a very different position in the world, when one of the porters of the establishment entered the office, and informed the clerk that the coach, which had long been expected, was in sight, and would be at the inn in a few minutes. I believe it was the old Highflyer, but at this distance of time I cannot speak with sufficient certainty. The strange story I am about to relate occurred when stage-coaches were the usual mode of conveyance, and long before any more expeditious system of travelling had engaged the attention of mankind.

I continued to sit by the fire till the coach arrived, and then walked into the street to count the number of the passengers, and observe their appearance. I was particularly struck with the appearance of one gentleman, who had ridden as an inside passenger. He wore a large black cloak, deeply trimmed with crape; his head was covered with a black travelling-cap, surmounted with two or three crape rosettes, and from which depended a long black tassel. The cap was drawn so far over his eyes that he had some difficulty to see his way. A black scarf was wrapped round the lower part of his face, so that his countenance was completely concealed from my view. He appeared anxious to avoid observation, and hurried into the inn as fast as he could. I returned to the office and mentioned to the clerk the strange appearance of the gentleman in question, but he was too busy to pay any attention to what I had said.

Presently afterwards a porter brought a small carpet-bag into the office, and placed it upon the table.

“Whose bag is that, Timms?” inquired the clerk.

“I don’t wish to be personal,” replied the man, “but I think it belongs to —,” and the fellow pointed to the floor.

“You don’t mean *him*, surely?” said the clerk.

“Yes, I do though; at any rate, if he is not the gentleman I take him for, he must be a second cousin of his, for he is the most unaccountable individual that ever I clapped my eyes on. There is not much good in him, I’ll be bound.”

I listened with breathless anxiety to these words. When the man had finished, I said to him,

“How was the gentleman dressed?”

“In black.”

“Had he a cloak on?”

“Yes.”

“A travelling-cap drawn over his eyes?”

“Yes.”

“It’s the man I saw descend from the coach,” I said to the clerk.

“Where is he?” inquired that gentleman.

“In the inn,” replied the porter.

“Is he going to stay all night?” I inquired.

"I don't know."

"It's very odd," observed the clerk, and he put his pen behind his ear, and placed himself in front of the fire; "very odd," he repeated.

"It don't look well," said the porter; "not at all."

Some further conversation ensued upon the subject, but as it did not tend to throw any light upon the personage in question, it is unnecessary for me to relate it.

Awhile afterwards, the clerk went into the hotel to learn, if possible, something more relative to this singular visitor. He was not absent more than a few minutes, and when he returned his countenance, I fancied, was more sedate than usual. I asked him if he had gathered any further information.

"There is nobody knows anything concerning him," he replied; "for when the servants enter the room, he always turns his back towards them. He has not spoken to a single individual since he arrived. There is a man who came by the same coach, who attends upon him, but he does not look like a servant."

"There is something extraordinary in his history, or I am much deceived."

"I am quite of your opinion," observed the clerk.

Whilst we were conversing, some persons entered the office to take places by the mail, which was to leave early on the following morning. I hereupon departed, and entered the inn with the view of satisfying my curiosity, if possible, which was now raised to the utmost pitch. The servants, I remarked, moved about more silently than usual, and sometimes I saw two or three of them conversing together, *sotto voce*, as though they did not wish their conversation to be overheard by those around them. I knew the room that the gentleman occupied, and stealthily and unobserved stole up to it, hoping to hear or see something that might throw some light upon his character. I was not, however, gratified in either respect.

I hastened back to the office and resumed my seat by the fire. The clerk and I were still conversing upon the subject, when one of the girls came in, and informed me that I was to get a horse and gig ready immediately, to drive a gentleman a distance of fifteen or twenty miles.

"To-night!" I said, in surprise.

"Immediately!"

"Why, it's already ten o'clock!"

"It's the master's orders; I cannot alter them," tartly replied the girl.

This unwelcome intelligence caused me to commit a great deal of sin, for I made use of a number of imprecations and expressions which were quite superfluous, and perfectly unavailing. It was not long before I was ready to commence the journey. I chose the fastest and strongest animal in the establishment, and one that had never failed me in an emergency. I lit the lamps, for the night was intensely dark, and I felt convinced that we should require them. The proprietor of the hotel gave me a paper, but told me not to read it till we had proceeded a few miles on the road, and informed me at the same time in what direction to drive. The paper, he added, would give me further instructions.

I was seated in the vehicle, busily engaged in fastening the leathern apron on the side on which I sat, in order to protect my limbs from the

cold, when somebody seated himself beside me. I heard the landlord cry, "Drive on;" and, without looking round, I lashed the mare into a very fast trot. Even now, whilst I write, I feel in some degree the trepidation which stole over me when I discovered who my companion was. I had not gone far before I was made acquainted with this astounding fact. It was as though an electric shock had suddenly and unexpectedly been imparted to my frame, or as, in a moment of perfect happiness, I had been hastily plunged into the greatest danger and distress. A benumbing chillness ran through me, and my mouth all at once became dry and parched. Whither was I to drive? I knew not. Who and what was my companion? I was equally ignorant. It was the man dressed so fantastically whom I had seen alight from the coach; whose appearance and inexplicable conduct had alarmed a whole establishment; whose character was a matter of speculation to everybody with whom he had come in contact. This was the substance of my knowledge. For aught I knew, he might be—— But no matter. The question that most concerned me was, how was I to extricate myself from this dilemma? Which was the best course to adopt? To turn back, and declare I would not travel in such a night, with so strange a person, or to proceed on my journey? I greatly feared the consequences of the former step would be fatal to my own interests. Besides, I should be exposed to the sneers and laughter of all who knew me. No: I had started, and I would proceed, whatever might be the issue of the adventure.

In a few minutes we had emerged from the town. My courage was now put to the severest test. The cheerful aspect of the streets, and the light thrown from the lamps and a few shop-windows, had hitherto buoyed me up, but my energy and firmness, I felt, were beginning to desert me. The road on which we had entered was not a great thoroughfare at any time, but at that late hour of the night I did not expect to meet either horseman or pedestrian to enliven the long and solitary journey. I cast my eyes before me, but could not discern a single light burning in the distance. The night was thick and unwholesome, and not a star was to be seen in the heavens. There was another matter which caused me great uneasiness. I was quite unarmed, and unprepared for any attack, should my companion be disposed to take advantage of that circumstance. These things flashed across my mind, and made a more forcible impression than they might otherwise have done, from the fact of a murder having been committed in the district only a few weeks before, under the most aggravated circumstances. An hypothesis suggested itself. Was this man the perpetrator of that deed,—the wretch who was endeavouring to escape from the officers of justice, and who was stigmatised with the foulest, the blackest crime that man could be guilty of? Appearances were against him. Why should he invest himself with such a mystery? Why conceal his face in so unaccountable a manner? What but a man conscious of great guilt, of the darkest crimes, would so furtively enter an inn, and afterwards steal away under the darkness of the night, when no mortal eye could behold him? If he was sensible of innocence, he might have deferred his journey till the morning, and faced, with the fortitude of a man, the broad light of day, and the scrutiny of his fellow-men. I say, appearances were against him, and I felt more and more convinced, that whatever his character was—

whatever his deeds might have been—that the present journey was instigated by fear and apprehension for his personal safety. But was I to be the instrument of his deliverance? Was I to be put to all this inconvenience in order to favour the escape of an assassin? The thought distracted me. I vowed that it should not be so. My heart chafed and fretted at the task that had been put upon me. My blood boiled with indignation at the bare idea of being made the tool of so unhallowed a purpose. I was resolved. I ground my teeth with rage. I grasped the reins with a tighter hold. I determined to be rid of the man,—nay, even to attempt to destroy him rather than it should be said that I had assisted in his escape. At some distance further on there was a river suitable for that purpose. When off his guard, he could in a moment be pushed into the stream; in certain places it was sufficiently deep to drown him. One circumstance perplexed me. If he escaped, he could adduce evidence against me. No matter: it would be difficult to prove that I had any intention of taking away his life. But should he be the person I conceived, he would not dare to come forward.

Hitherto we had ridden without exchanging a word. Indeed, I had only once turned my eyes upon him since we started. The truth was, I was too busy with my own thoughts,—too intent upon devising some plan to liberate myself from my unparalleled situation. I now cast my eyes furtively towards him. I shuddered as I contemplated his proximation to myself. I fancied I already felt his contaminating influence. The cap, as before, was drawn over his face; the scarf muffled closely round his chin, and only sufficient space allowed for the purpose of respiration. I was most desirous of knowing who he was; indeed, had he been "the Man with the Iron Mask," so many years incarcerated in the French Bastile, he could scarcely have excited a greater curiosity.

I deemed it prudent to endeavour to draw him into conversation, thinking that he might drop some expression that would, in some measure, tend to elucidate his history. Accordingly, I said,

"It's a very dark, unhealthy night, sir."

He made no reply. I thought he might not have heard me.

"A bad night for travelling!" I shouted, in a loud tone of voice.

The man remained immovable, without in the least deigning to notice my observation. He either did not wish to talk, or he was deaf. If he wished to be silent, I was contented to let him remain so.

It had not occurred to me till now that I had received a paper from the landlord which would inform me whither my extraordinary companion was to be conveyed. My heart suddenly received a new impulse—it beat with hope and expectation. This document might reveal to me something more than I was led to expect; it might unravel the labyrinth in which I was entangled, and extricate me from all further difficulty. But how was I to decipher the writing? There was no other means of doing so than by stopping the vehicle and alighting, and endeavouring to read it by the aid of the lamp, which, I feared, would afford but a very imperfect light after all. Before I had recourse to this plan, I deemed it expedient to address once more my taciturn companion.

"Where am I to drive you to?" I inquired, in so loud a voice that the mare started off at a brisker pace, as though I had been speaking to her. I received no reply, and, without further hesitation, I drew in the reins,

pulled the paper from my pocket, and alighted. I walked to the lamp, and held the paper as near to it as I could. The handwriting was not very legible, and the light afforded me so weak, that I had great difficulty to discover its meaning. The words were few and pointed. The reader will judge of my surprise when I read the following laconic sentence:—"Drive the gentleman to Grayburn Churchyard!" I was more alarmed than ever; my limbs shook violently, and in an instant I felt the blood fly from my cheeks. What did my employer mean by imposing such a task upon me? My fortitude in some degree returned, and I walked up to the mare and patted her on the neck.

"Poor thing—poor thing!" I said; "you have a long journey before you, and it may be a dangerous one."

I looked at my companion, but he appeared to take no notice of my actions, and seemed as indifferent as if he were a corpse. I again resumed my seat, and in part consoled myself with the prospect of being speedily rid of him in some way or other, as the river I have already alluded to was now only two or three miles distant. My thoughts now turned to the extraordinary place to which I was to drive—Grayburn Churchyard! What could the man do there at that hour of the night? Had he somebody to meet?—something to see or obtain? It was incomprehensible—beyond the possibility of human divination. Was he insane, or was he bent upon an errand perfectly rational, although for the present wrapped in the most impenetrable mystery? I am at a loss for language adequate to convey a proper notion of my feelings on that occasion. He shall never arrive, I internally ejaculated, at Grayburn Churchyard; he shall never pass beyond the stream, which even now I almost heard murmuring in the distance! Heaven forgive me for harbouring such intentions! but when I reflected that I might be assisting an assassin to fly from justice, I conceived I was acting perfectly correct in adopting any means (no matter how bad) for the obviation of so horrid a consummation. For aught I knew, his present intention might be to visit the grave of his victim, for now I remembered that the person who had so lately been murdered was interred in this very churchyard.

We gradually drew nearer to the river. I heard its roaring with fear and trepidation. It smote my heart with awe when I pondered upon the deed I had in contemplation. I could discover, from its rushing sound, that it was much swollen, and this was owing to the recent heavy rains. The stream in fine weather was seldom more than a couple of feet deep, and could be crossed without danger or difficulty; there however were places where it was considerably deeper. On the occasion in question, it was more dangerous than I had ever known it. There was no bridge constructed across it at this place, and people were obliged to get through it as well as they could. Nearer and nearer we approached. The night was so dark that it was quite impossible to discern anything. I could feel the beatings of my heart against my breast,—a cold, clammy sweat settled upon my brow, and my mouth became so dry that I fancied I was choking. The moment was at hand that was to put my resolution to the test. A few yards only separated us from the spot that was to terminate my journey, and, perhaps, the mortal career of my incomprehensible companion. The light of the lamps threw a dull, lurid gleam upon the surface of the water. It rushed furiously past, surging and boiling as it

leaped over the rocks that here and there intersected its channel. Without a moment's hesitation, I urged the mare forward, and in a minute we were in the midst of the stream. It was a case of life or death! The water came down like a torrent—its tide was irresistible. There was not a moment to be lost. My own life was at stake. With the instinctive feeling of self-preservation, I drove the animal swiftly through the dense body of water, and in a few seconds we had gained the opposite bank of the river. We were safe, but the opportunity of ridding myself of my companion was rendered, by the emergency of the case, unavailable.

I know not how it was, but I suddenly became actuated by a new impulse. Wretch though he was, he had intrusted his safety, his life, into my hands. There was, perhaps, still some good in the man, by enabling him to escape, I might be the instrument of his eternal salvation. He had done me no injury, and at some period of his life he might have rendered good offices to others. I pitied his situation, and determined to render him what assistance I could. I applied the whip to the mare. In a moment she seemed to be endowed with supernatural energy and swiftness. Though he was a murderer—though he was henceforth to be driven from society as an outcast, he should not be deserted in his present emergency. On, on we sped; hedges, trees, houses were passed in rapid succession. Nothing impeded our way. We had a task to perform—a duty to fulfil; dangers and difficulties fled before us. A human life depended upon our exertions, and every nerve required to be strained for its preservation. On, on we hurried. My enthusiasm assumed the appearance of madness. I shouted to the mare till I was hoarse, and broke the whip in several places. Although we comparatively flew over the ground, I fancied we did not go fast enough. My body was in constant motion, as though it would give an impetus to our movements. My companion appeared conscious of my intentions, and, for the first time, evinced an interest in our progress. He drew out his handkerchief, and used it incessantly as an incentive to swiftness. Onward we fled. We were all actuated by the same motive. This concentration of energy gave force and vitality to our actions.

The night had hitherto been calm, but the rain now began to descend in torrents, and at intervals we heard distant peals of thunder. Still we progressed; we were not to be baffled, not to be deterred; we would yet defy pursuit. Large tracts of country were passed over with amazing rapidity. Objects, that at one moment were at a great distance, in another were reached, and in the next left far behind. Thus we sped forward—thus we seemed to annihilate space altogether. We were endowed with superhuman energies—hurried on by an impulse, involuntary and irresistible. My companion became violent, and appeared to think we did not travel quick enough. He rose once or twice from his seat, and attempted to take the remnant of the whip from my hand, but I resisted, and prevailed upon him to remain quiet.

How long we were occupied in this mad and daring flight, I cannot even conjecture. We reached, at length, our destination; but, alas! we had no sooner done so, than the invaluable animal that had conveyed us thither dropped down dead!

My companion and I alighted. I walked up to where the poor animal

lay, and was busy deplored her fate, when I heard a struggle at a short distance. I turned quickly round, and beheld the mysterious being with whom I had ridden so fatal a journey, in the custody of two powerful looking men.

“ Ha, ha ! I thought he would make for this here place,” said one of them. “ He still has a hankering after his mother’s grave. When he got away before, we nabbed him here.”

The mystery was soon cleared up. The gentleman had escaped from a lunatic asylum, and was both deaf and dumb. The death of his mother, a few years before, had caused the mental aberration.

The horrors of the night are impressed as vividly upon my memory as though they had just occurred. The expenses of the journey were all defrayed, and I was presented with a handsome gratuity. I never ceased, however, to regret the loss of the favourite mare.

VALDARNO; OR, THE ORDEAL OF ART-WORSHIP.

A BIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER XVI.

I CAUSED the body of Moro to be conveyed to the castle for interment. After being embalmed, it was stretched upon a bier in the private chapel, with heraldic honours, and their pompous accompaniments. Armorial bearings were emblazoned upon a standard—a mulberry-tree, with the fruit fallen, crested by a hand and dagger, and surmounted by the motto, “ Vengeance is mine.” This was raised above the bier, and it floated among ancient monuments of the dead.

The castle was now a scene of mourning; and of such a kind ! I had resolved to bring Orazio and the murderers of Moro face to face at the funeral, that the former might be aware that he was watched by men—that his evil deeds were visible. Besides Piombino and Montecatino, therefore, Scoroncoucolo and his twelve, of which number was Thanatos, were present, all armed, and richly attired in Spanish costume; and, lastly, Orazio and his bride. Much surprise was manifested by all at such an assemblage having been thus brought together, for though the brigand was introduced under the old name of Brancaleone, he was easily recognised; and Orazio would have quitted the castle had not my retainers, who at that time formed a band of fifty men, acted under orders to permit no one to depart.

I had not declared my motive to any of the party, the friends of Moro excepted, in congregating these strange characters under my roof; and even when the funeral service began, it was supposed that mass was to be celebrated only for Moro’s soul, an intimation to that effect having been made just as the sound of trumpet summoned us to the chapel. The announcement was variously received; some were willing to decline attendance altogether; but my orders were peremptory, and all were speedily assured that they must be obeyed. But while objecting to the

mass for the unfortunate soul of the deceased, the party most concerned had not a remote suspicion that they should have to encounter the body of their victim.

I had again obtained the aid of the great Palestrina, who, in compliance with my wish, adapted a hymn to solemn music, and composed a fresh mass for the present occasion. The hour of divine service being at hand, the visitors and members of the household, escorted by my band of followers, crossed to the chapel, which was in the court, while the retainers themselves stood around the door outside, with their arms displayed.

“And thou wouldest have lived a prince,” thought I, on reaching the bier, “and all owing to me. But though disappointed of honour and felicity during life, posterity shall regard thy name with envy, for in princely state shall thy remains lie and await the judgment.”

Having paused while my sentiments were thus silently uttered, I passed on. As the others descended the steps into the chapel after me, there was a general expression of surprise, for the space was narrow, and the body met all eyes in an instant. Each, as he moved along, paused to glance over the well-preserved features, those of the most beautiful face on earth, the choicest model of the artist, and now suddenly prostrate, concluding its career by exhibiting immortality to death. His revenge looked safe in the indifference of that new aspect! Or was it the expression imposed by a since penitent soul, whose last will on earth had been to proceed, in spite of death itself, as an agent of sin? If penitent, it was too late; the corpse would rise again in thirst for another’s blood, and in that state the soul must rejoin its tenement, accountable for all consequences of its evil will thenceforward up to the day of doom. Such is the legacy the dead leave themselves; their spiritual lot to look down upon the ever-increasing tide of their own wickedness, as it rolls on beneath them, through many souls, at last through a living ocean, when it is too late to control its impulse. Piombino, already joined in the secret with the physician and me, shed his tears and wrung his hands over the pale body, whose beauty appeared to have come back to the face, as if to dwell yet for a longer time with it than hitherto.

Orazio set his cold eyes on the bier as he passed, but his lips had whitened, while his frown was that of the conscience-stricken impenitent, whose vengeance seemed to return with the life-like beauty of the dead; and thus my purpose so far was accomplished. When all else had moved by, it was the brigand’s turn; but, standing firm, he silently but stoutly refused to pass and do homage, while his followers supported him, by taking upon themselves a like attitude of defiance, each throwing his left foot forward, and raising his head; the eyes of some on the roof, of others on the wall or pavement, while each man’s hand was upon his weapon. Meantime the priests, entering in gaudy procession, were chanting as follows:—

Laid low is our dear brother now:
No eddying wrongs at his heart meeting.
Death’s beauty sleeps upon his brow,
Without a dream its Maker greeting.

The past in lines of peace is writ
On that cold tablet of his spirit.
No sin upon the dead can sit:
The tomb can but the clay inherit.

Vengeance is His, ye sons of dust !
 Touch not its rod, for Mercy wields it :
 In Him, ye faithful, put your trust,
 Aim not at life, for Justice shields it.

Vengeance is His, ye sons of clay !
 Touch not its rod, all wrath subsideath ;
 His anger is not of a day,
 God's time all chastisement abideth.

Prostrate at last are all who live :
 The faithful take their wrongs to heaven ;
 It is their license to forgive :
 But are the wicked thence forgiven ?

The soul knows all her destiny,
 When in the past she reads the morrow ;
 Thus sin, which lived to only die,
 Descends the gulf of ancient sorrow.

This hymn, distinctly sung, had an elevating effect, and high mass proceeded in the usual manner. The ceremony of the church being over, dinner succeeded ; it was served on the shady side of the sunlit court, and the party, together with the priests, sat down. Orazio, almost before our repast was over, left the table with looks of scorn, and, on the plea of joining in the civil war which had begun to rage, quitted the castle for the capital, taking his wife with him. The musicians played at intervals the most cheering tunes, and made the scene appear one of rejoicing ; and thus the brigands found their recent hospitality to me returned. Scoronconcolo had been prevailed on to bring his band to the castle, depending on my word for his safety, and expecting a reward. But the event of this visit proved foreign to his taste. Having dined, we sat long afterwards under the shade, drinking freely of cool potations, for the afternoon was sultry, though a breeze stirred. In view was the old chapel, its door open, its window of yellow panes, on which there were painted saints, seen within through the portal. My eyes travelled thither for rest, and lingered about the holy place ; a hanging reverie upon them, a sort of thoughtful halo which had got outside the mind, as if in meditation purposing to inspect the dried-up bed where tears had not lately flooded. In this mood, I saw the green, bright foliage which had clung about the arch of the chapel doorway, heard its low rustling ; and it seemed almost to cease when observed, as if its sound had secrets to convey into the house of prayer ; and then it would repeat itself with a deeper agitation, as though unable to maintain long silence on the passing events. The leaves, whose brisk doings thus moved my wondering spirit, even as the moon had recently done before the marriage, were of ivy, which was pendant between the glare outside and the subdued light of the little interior, where the body of Moro remained on its bier. But there was something in these shaking leaves to be observed and listened to, and I was led to think of the unburied—not visible at that distance, but to my consciousness the seeming source of nature's most peculiar quiet. The trickling noise of the leaves went on and off—their subdued sound stirring my fancy with an eloquence of its own, which seemed to whisper busily across the body to the saints upon the windows, as if descanting on the mysteries of man's death and resurrection. Such was my idea, and I advanced, that I might be nearer to those serious discourses. I

descended into the chapel; at the farthest left there was a recess principally occupied by a monumental effigy. My eyes caught sight of crumbling pictures on the walls, and armour, then of the monument in the recess, which was inured to death's century-long lucubrations; but they were soon on the corpse, self-representative of a freshly-winged spirit. As I looked on the countenance, and at the last rays the sun would yield it through those dim panes—giving it an aspect of immortality—the leaves spoke again, while the body lay as a mute listener to the straggling words which came to it thence, from this natural world, as if to be with it to the very last, preaching of faith and life to come.

I had not the spirit to entertain my party, nor to observe the guests, who one by one disappeared, as the dead had done, without being missed, and all at once I found myself alone; but not long so, for the image of Giuditta came back to me, and returned with me into my empty dwelling. At midnight I saw the tomb closed upon its new tenant, and the banner was left to float over the not-inglorious memory of Moro.

I had engaged the affections of Giuditta and not loved her, so her image only was to be wedded to me: and it remained with me, its looks of goodness depressing me into depths of remorse, which, as part of our eternal being, are commonly left to spread about us hereafter if in woe, or to be otherwise ever hidden from our knowledge. So intricate became the entanglements round about me of each regretful remembrance, that, as in a cage—the soul's last prison—I lived in reverie rather than in actual life, avoiding all intercourse with others.

News came at last—as if to break in upon my solitary condition—that Volterra was in a state of siege. The intelligence roused me, and ere long the sound of arms rang through the castle. The city was in the hands of the republicans, and fresh troops were on their route there. A rebellion had burst out in support of the Medici, the object of its leaders being to shake off the yoke of the Gonfalonieri, and espouse that of Clement, a cause in which I was only too ready, on many accounts, to enlist.

Summoned to the contest by the city rendered sacred to me by family associations, I gladly collected my retainers, and plunged into the scene of action.

The citadel had remained in the hands of the republicans; but, notwithstanding a disadvantage thus formidable, I galloped up the steep, followed by my troop, and we made our way into the city without serious opposition. The arrival of fresh succours gave encouragement to the populace, which they stood in need of, a large number of the insurgents having already perished. Our arrival was a signal to the mass to rally once more, and we were shortly joined by several of the nobility. Preparations for a new fight became general; and such was the impetuosity of the mob, they were no sooner collected, than, with shouts and songs, they made a rush upon the fortress, and, to their own astonishment, drove numbers of the foe down the steep with irresistible force; and not even content with this advantage, they pursued them to the foot of the mountain, and put not a few to death, and as many more to flight.

When this achievement became known to the government, Ferruci was despatched to the contest, aided by a detachment under Giugni, who had to fight his way to the scene of action, and, but for the assistance of

Ferruci, would have been defeated in a battle fought with us across the Pesa. Every effort, meantime, was made by the inhabitants of Volterra to fortify their city, and guard it; but the struggle, once recommenced, was of brief duration; for the fortress was still held by the Florentines. The nobles, however, and others possessed of spirit, were, for the sake of their honour, indisposed to yield the day without a fresh trial of strength, and it fell to my lot to assume the command on that day. All that we could propose to ourselves was to keep the heights at the moment of the enemy's approach, and hurl huge stones, or whatever else was at hand, upon the invaders. To enable us to pursue this plan of warfare, it was necessary to separate our force, that one division of it might oppose itself to the fortress, while the other kept in check the ascending column of the enemy. And so easy is it when men are earnest to engage even against greater numbers, it was at one time hoped that victory might be declared in our favour. The fortress actually fell into our hands, and many within its walls were put to the sword. But after several hours of hard fighting Ferruci recaptured the city, and those who escaped rushed to the defence of their homes. Thus beaten, the leaders of the insurrection were glad to accompany me to my castle. Once there, attack was improbable, so depressed was the condition of republican affairs; nor, in case of need, would a lengthened resistance on our part have been otherwise than easy to maintain.

Thanatos, with fifty others, had followed me in the expedition, but he disappeared on the second day. As our people approached the castle, on our retreat, their numbers not greatly diminished, and all in high spirits at the gallant part they had sustained, the evening suddenly closed in. Our journey, together with all thought of pursuit, at an end, we allowed our horses to walk quietly up the avenue. I, perhaps more exhausted than the rest, lagged behind. I was in thought; that deep thought which, like the depths of the waters, is immovable, and without an object. Thus sombre and vacant, I was brought back to reality by two blows being dealt upon me simultaneously. I fell from my charger with a groan, the eyes of Thanatos and Orazio Pallavicini floating in the haze of my vision.

My people heard me. Some made pursuit of the assassins; others, horror-stricken, raised me in their arms and bore me to the castle. I was placed upon my bed half insensible; the blood gushed out from my body, and, as life ebbed, the spirit itself seemed to rise like a gigantic flood which was about to overflow space. To its side came the forms of heroes—the priestly warriors of my line—the antique smile upon their features expressive of approval; my danger unobserved by them, and of no account; my act in favour of Volterra a consolation to the dead of old.

I was giddy as one who, with mental vision, saw worlds revolve as he drew nearer to them on his passage hence. I tossed myself about with alternating wavings of the arm,—like the wounded who salutes death on the field of battle. The drug was administered, and these inward watchings were converted into the strange sleep of science, in which the soul gets up from the body and walks about this world, conscious of gigantic powers. Horsed and plumed, I rode with well-poised lance, as on the air. Under commands issued by my glance, polygonal blocks were

snatched from walls, and flung around like hailstones. The foe rolled like light clouds down the steep into the valley, and disappeared like buried shadows under the sward of the meadows.

I sat long upon my saddle, my eyes transfixing reflection, my thoughts in the bottomless present, like stars seen within a well by day; and calm, as if amid those twilights which hover between the living and the dead. Then came a murmur of waters to my ear, and a burning thirst choked my throat. A cool stream burst upwards across my immovable sight; the spray fell; but my lips had lost their will. Who was it that knew how I desired to bend to the fountain?

My eyes unclosed upon a Sister of Mercy as she touched my mouth with a cup of water. I saw my attendant with a sigh, and took her soul to mine; drew her into my inward being as my eyes closed again. It was Giuditta; and the sight of the forgiving one was sadness, yet peace. I then slept like the adamant: self-forgotten was I as my infancy; blank as the immediate retrospect of the few who have risen from the dead.

And she nursed me tenderly for weeks. My gratitude, as is ever the case in these circumstances, grew warmer daily, and soon melted into distressing and unendurable affection. It was love; the inevitable result of care from the hand of beauty during illness! In the chamber of the sick every grace soon lets drop its mask: the labour of duty, the fortitude already over-wrought, these cannot bear to be further taxed, not even in concealment of goodness itself, so modest at other times as to need a garment: but truth unconstrained is left visible as after years of affection. All would be loved by all, as by one, but for this veil so rarely torn!

“I must not hear you,” she would say, in answer to my selfish protestations; “be not self-deceived again. You have not yet known love: you cannot mislead one who has. Your yearnings for Melissa were due to another as yet unseen; to one who, once seen, all doubt must vanish: for the means of real bliss brings faith with it to the believer. I know all; dreams are vouchsafed to the earnest,—dreams which come to pass. Despair not; divine love, such as is in reserve for you, does not, cannot despair. I love you as you may one day love: I despair not, but am full of hope! My hope is eternal—for you!”

“Such is love; as yet you have not known it. Twice now you have despaired; not once loved!”

The din of arms sounded again under the walls of Volterra; once more I was in the thick of the fight. I faced the intrepid Ferruci and hoped—it was at the sight of his lofty stature and fiery eye—hoped to meet the vain-glorious death. But like death his pallid looks met mine, and he glided away. I rushed to the breach; there shone the helmet of Ferruci: I was repulsed with my comrades. I then sought death at the other breach; Ferruci was there.

Against the vigilance of this man we could effect nothing. He was everywhere, cheering his men by eloquence and example. As often as we appeared at the breach we were repulsed; and when at length Ferruci was wounded, and forced to retire, the victory was ours. But he reappeared, and we were driven down the precipice amid showers of stones, and boiling oil in torrents. Horrible was the slaughter, and both armies were alike infected by the death-like silence of the slain.

I remained a week on the field, attended by my page Mezzofonte; not

wounded, but exhausted. After this interval the siege was renewed with batteries. At the first discharge sixty feet of the ramparts fell ! I arose, and with others rushed to the assault ; but before us stood Ferruci once more. He was now a walking fever, a gaunt effigy of wounds ; but his lips and soul gave courage to the downcast. As fast as we clambered up the precipice we were dashed back by all kinds of missiles, among them spiked planks and loose barrels of stones, which carried havoc and destruction about their path. Maddened by each other's vengeful shouts and eager, blood-shot looks, we returned to the conquest, led on by the brave Spaniard Diego Sarmiento, whose tall figure and white plume soared conspicuously ; and this time we planted four banners on the walls.

And now came the close encounter ; the thrust was made at random by strengthless men ; the sound of artillery died away heavily ; and while the stab was unfelt, glory and death rolled together into one dream.

The banners had been torn down, and all their bearers, save myself, had perished. One dagger only was directed at me ; but ere the point reached, the guilty Orazio rolled at my feet, cut down by a blow from Mezzofonte. The next moment Thanatos was visible ; but on seeing Orazio down, and my eyes fastened on himself, he fled like a shadow.

The struggle was over ; the victory was with Ferruci.

Weeks elapsed, and the fever of that day still raged within me. When reason at length shone, and I looked about, and inquired where it was I lay, it was she who answered me—Giuditta ! Yes, she had found me out among the thousands of living and dead. I was at Volterra. When I asked whose guest I had been, the immortal Ferruci was at my side !

Giuditta had nursed me again through my danger in compliance with a meek conscience ; and had departed contented with her work when my life was safe. How can I, who am so base a being, relate the full history of her devotion ? In a few words let me tell what occurred. She had followed me to the walls, penetrated the foe in her dress of Mercy, obtained an interview of Ferruci on the eve of battle, and revealed to him that her broken-hearted Prince of Valanidi hoped to put an end to his troubles in the approaching conflict.

The hero needed no further parley, but spared my life as often as it was threatened ; which was rarely but in his presence, for both of us were ever foremost in the fight. It was he, too, who truly saved my well-loved city from rapine and plunder ; for had he not been invincible, it must have shared all the crowning atrocities of war at the hands of the invaders. Alas, his race of glory had already nearly run ! So great a name, acquired in so short a time, is destined to be one of the marvels of history ; and therefore was his career cut short at the hour in which he saw the liberty of his country blotted out from the globe.

THE DUSTY PHILOSOPHER; OR, A STAGE-COACH
BIOGRAPHY.

BEING THE THIRD CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR,
PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

BY JOSEPH ANTHONY, JUN.

I am not unattended—
You heard the thunder roll above my head,
My fate will lead me. Fear not, I shall reach
Th' appointed goal without my seeking it.

SCHILLER.

"Hillo! hold hard!" exclaimed *s* voice, proceeding from the dense clouds of dust which the Rover well-appointed four-horse coach had, in going its favourite pace on a broiling day in July, raised around it from the white glistening turnpike-road, which conducts man and horse from W— to B—, and which that deuce of a fellow to "bowl them along," as he calls it, the coachman of the said Rover, declares to be the "best bit o' ground in all England."

"Wb!" cried our driver, with a voice resembling the lowest note on a violoncello, at the same time pulling his wheelers back on their haunches; and, as the Rover came to a stand-still, the owner of the voice who had summoned us to stop emerged from the dust, which had at first hid him from view.

"There's room behind!" exclaimed our whip, as he eyed the candidate for place, whose seedy suit, and battered-looking hat, rendered none the better in appearance for the dust with which they were covered, indicated something akin to poverty on the part of their possessor. "There's room behind! How far are ye going?"

"There's room in front also, my nonpareil," replied the new comer, gaily, with a smile on his worn, yet not unprepossessing countenance; and without noticing the question which had been put to him, showing considerable agility he mounted the coach, and with a polite "Permit me, sir," as he passed, took his seat beside me, placing a small bundle at his feet, which, suspended from a stick, he had been carrying over his shoulder. Wiping his perspiring forehead with an old silk handkerchief, whose tattered state appeared, like its owner, to speak of other days, the new comer, addressing the coachman, exclaimed,

"Proceed, old buffalo; and, if your cattle like it, go the pace again."

The genius of the Rover, or, in other words, our coachman, turned his eyes over his shoulder at the speaker, with something like astonishment depicted in their expression, and as though he were about to make a reply; but with a slight grunt he turned again on his seat, intent only on "keeping 'em together," and away once more went the chestnut and three bays, as the whip, in the height of his admiration, if asked the question, would have said, "like birds."

"Sancho, Sancho!" cried the dusty stranger, standing up as the Rover again moved on, the call being addressed to a four-footed companion, which, with a joyful bark responsive to his master's voice, announced

himself as all right, and sagacious as the prototype of his name, keeping ahead of the dust, in the front of the Rover.

"Good dog! good dog!" ejaculated he of the bundle, resuming his seat, and turning a glance upon me after a moment's pause, during which he had recourse again to his tattered bandana, whilst, by the expression of his countenance, evidently speculating on my physiognomy, he thus addressed me:

"Beautiful country this, sir,—well-wooded, hill and dale,—very beautiful! Seen it though, probably, before? Ah! sir, is it not a pity, ten thousand pities, a treat lost, to pass through it on such a broiling day, when the poor leaves look choking with thirst, and all nature seems to cry 'down with the dust.'"

With a smile, at the oddity of the speaker's remarks, I replied,

"It was a pity."

"Ah!" he resumed, seemingly pleased with the response which I had made to his overture for conversation, "how much they lose who know not, feel not the beauty of the country! A man, sir, who can pass his days hemmed in by bricks and mortar, and never sigh for the green fields and the laughing streams, is unfitted for the seventh heaven; when he shuffles off this mortal coil, his soul should die with him, nor be allowed to wing its flight to the realms of immortality."

The dusty traveller paused, and looked at me inquiringly, as though expecting me to assent to the opinion which he had expressed.

"A poor and enthusiastic poet," I mentally ejaculated, and observed in reply, "that there was much to be said on both sides, town and country."

"True, sir, true," he returned, speaking rapidly, and with much animation; "town with its gaiety, country its solitude: the last opera—the new waltz—the glittering hall—the brilliant throng—the siren's song—the inspiring dance. Country: the incense-breathing morn—the fields—the flowers—the soaring lark—the mountain bee—the shadowy landscape—the sombre woods—the hooting owl. Fair contrasts these, and for which shall we decide? Light heart country—heavy heart town. Yes, it must be so; humanity has an universal tendency to gloom; so, taking all in all, why town for me. Yes, the hurly-burly, the glitter, the whirl, the din, have more of cheer for the worn heart than the country—the still—the lovely—the peaceful—the beautiful."

The owner of the bundle uttered the last few words slowly, and with a subdued voice, and, when he had ceased speaking, his tattered handkerchief again came forth to wipe his forehead and his eyes together.

"A broken player!" I now mentally exclaimed; and drawing forth my cigar-case I invited him to smoke with me.

"Thank you," he replied, in a tone of voice which had changed again to cheerfulness, even gaiety, "I am already armed, as you may see," drawing, as he spoke, from his coat pocket, a short black pipe, "and carry also good store of munition in that best of leaves the Yarra, but I will not decline your offer. No, no; my pipe I like well enough—Sancho and it are my dearest companions; but a cigar is an agreeable change, which my exchequer don't often sanction, and so I'll accept your offer, and thank you. Ah, sir," he continued, after courteously first passing to me the light which he had struck, "let me not suffer so far in your estimation as to suppose that I wish to make a return for your gift in 'soft

sawder,' when I tell you that I think you are of the right kidney, and that if there were more of your sort in the great cast of the play of life, the business would go much more smoothly on. Pardon me one moment," continued the stranger, seeing I was about to speak, "what I mean is this, that nine out of every ten possessing better suits than this Mantuan apothecary-like lot of mine, would, thus meeting, turn up their noses at me, as though perforre I must be a cracksman, or there be contagion in my very looks; forgetting it might be just possible that they were judging unjustly, as well as neglecting an opportunity of doing good at a cheap cost, which would be the case, by cheering up a perhaps desponding heart, whose path had been cast in rough places, and whose real deserts, mayhap, might be much nearer pity than contempt. Besides," continued the stranger, after a short pause, "companionship, however humble, must tend to lessen the tediousness of a long journey. Were I one of the wealthiest men in England, my carriage and the postchaise should be at times dispensed with for the stage-coach, when I would invite rather than shun conversation with the passengers whom chance might cast in my way, and find therein amusement, even though I should, as it is told of a learned doctor similarly influenced, have to try some of them on no higher theme than that of leather."

I could not refrain from a smile, or from observing to my loquacious companion that I fully agreed with him in the view he took of the subject; "and yet," I added, "much should be allowed on the score of the reserve of English character."

"Oh, no, no," returned he of the bundle, with a bitter smile, "that in my case would not apply. Pride, sir, pride and suspicion—the pride of the new against the old coat, and the suspicion that the old coat, if made familiar with, might perchance want a favour of the new. And yet I know human nature well enough to declare, that there are many poor bankupts in fortune like myself, who never did, and who never will, sacrifice their spirit of independence, and who retain untarnished their self-pride amidst all their trials. There are hundreds like myself, sir, in the low ranks of the battle of life who, though very poor, are yet very proud, who possess the true nobility of spirit, and to whom the offer of charity would be insult. I have myself been even lower in the scale than you now behold me—almost

As one who stands upon a rock
Environed with a wilderness of sea,
Who marks the waxing tide grow wave by wave,
Expecting ever when some envious surge
Will in its brinish bowels swallow him.

Yes, sir, I have been at times almost on the brink of despair, but never yet have I begged favour of a human soul, or sacrificed one jot of my self-respect and independence of spirit; and, as long as poverty shall be no crime, I can be proud even in rags, ay, and afford to smile, too, at the pride of the world."

A flash of colour suffused the hitherto pale cheeks of the speaker, and I could not be otherwise than struck with the general expression of self-reliance which his features bore.

Becoming interested in the stranger, I encouraged him to further conversation, in the course of which I found that my surmise was correct—he was a player—and had in his time played many parts indeed.

"I have starred it," he observed, in a tone of jocularity, "as *Shylock* and as *Richard*, and have gone on also as *Salanio* and the first murderer."

He of the bundle had, indeed, seen something of the world, and experienced many trials, inculcating, however, a very useful philosophy therefrom, with "which, whilst he had health and strength," he said, "he could get on merrily enough, and would snap his fingers at all blue devils;" and again quoting his favourite bard whilst addressing me, the dusty philosopher exclaimed,

"I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
A stage, where every man must play a part."

Soon after our discussion of this subject, the Rover pulled up at a roadside inn, where, after the horses had been watered, the coachman brandy-and-watered, and he of the bundle and myself "home-brewed," not forgetting the four-footed friend of my companion, who came for and received a most affectionate caress from his master, we resumed our journey, and the dusty philosopher and myself our conversation.

"My history," said he, soon afterwards, in allusion to an observation which I had made on the subject, "has nothing in it particularly remarkable, and yet it may amuse you. Listen, and I will give you an account of my harum-scarum and, alas! worse than unprofitable career. You will excuse my prefacing the narrative with a quotation, the beauty of which all must admire, the truth too many—alas! I for one—have experienced:—

As we do turn our backs
From our companion thrown into his grave,
So his familiars to his buried fortunes
Slink all away, leave their false vows with him,
Like empty purses pick'd; and his poor self,
A dedicated beggar to the air,
With his disease of all shunn'd poverty,
Walks, like contempt, alone."

The tones of the stranger's voice were full of music, and the reading was given most exquisitely. I was free in my encomiums, and begged him to proceed. With a smile, indicating that my appreciation of his perfect elocution had gratified him, he continued:—"A few miles further on I shall leave the coach for a small village which lies near, and the tower of whose church is visible from the road. In the outskirts of that village I was born. For some years I have not visited the place, and after to-morrow—

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty space from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
Th' way to dusky death.

After to-morrow's sojourn amid the scenes of my boyhood, I quit it, and for ever. Were you, sir, acquainted with the geography of the place, I would call to your remembrance a farm, known as the Grange, situated in one of the loveliest of spots of this loveliest of counties. The dwelling stands in a valley, shut in on one side by undulating slopes of richly-cultivated upland; on the other by a far-spreading wood, at whose base, in the quiet of a summer's evening, a brawling brook is heard, rivalling with its music the blackbird's song. Looking from the valley, cresting the cultured upland, a venerable ruin presents itself to the gaze.

and with its last lone tower and rugged outline of mouldering walls, pictured on the background of a sunset sky, might seem to the eye of imagination the fallen bulwark of a happy valley. Here I was born. Here passed a calm, if not a happy boyhood. I had but one brother, and he, as was his father before him, became a farmer. My father had relatives in London, who occasionally visited us at the Grange. I had ever an inclination and longing for more bustling scenes than our country life afforded, and to gratify my wish—the facilities being afforded through my father's connexions—I was placed in a large mercantile house in London soon after I had completed my fifteenth year. I have not time, nor, indeed, would I weary you with the particulars of my progress to manhood. I had plenty of money; for, as well as a liberal allowance from my father, my mother's purse was ever open to me, and I drew from it to an extent that only a mother could allow, and only could a mother believe such pleas as I made to justify the unsparing plunder. The life of a young fellow in London, with means and the inclination to indulge himself, need not be repeated; 'tis, indeed, a threecold tale, and I know not that my career presents any marked difference to that of hundreds of others, who have before me, and who are now, hurrying along the tide to ruin. During the time of my engagement with the house in which I had been placed to acquire a knowledge of business, it was not so much the money expended as the habits which I had contracted, that rendered it so eventful a period of my life. When the term had expired, I found myself free; and with the natural tact which I possessed, and general business acquirements, I might, with application, have been, having capital left me at the time, now a London merchant, instead of a broken strolling player. But application I had not; on the contrary, business became distasteful to me; and the only atmosphere that seemed congenial to my soul was that of scenes of excitement, no matter what their character.

"The capital which I found myself in possession of at that critical period in my career, became mine through the death of my father. I returned to town, after attending his funeral, with the promises made to him, of attending to his solemn advice, fresh on my lips—promises, alas! soon forgotten, and with ample means I commenced the fool's career. 'Tis past, 'tis gone. In the midst of my life of extravagance and insensate folly, I was for a brief period checked by the intelligence of my mother's death; all that she had to leave was left to me, and—mother-like to the last—she attributed the course of life which I was pursuing, not to the tendency of my own disposition, but to the Philistines into whose hands I had fallen, and I was, of course, to the last by her regarded as her dear, unfortunate boy. My brother continued the farm for some years, and married; but unfortunately for his matrimonial speculation, his better half proved to be a drunkard. He quitted the farm, converted his effects into cash, and, making an allowance for his first love, left the country. And thus of my family I was the last. Ah! sir, what I might have done with the means once mine is for me now bitterly to remember; what I have done, tell thou the tale my very seedy suit! That I have played many parts, I have already intimated; but little did I deem, when for my amusement in town I joined a party of amateurs, that a future day would witness my histrionic displays to get me bread. That I have sounded the sea of humanity with the plummet of poverty, you

will readily imagine. As long as my cash lasted, 'twas of course with me, as it ever was and ever will be whilst man is man, whilst L. S. D. shall prove more powerful than friendship. Talk of Aladdin's lamp, or Prospero's wand,—give me the talisman of L. S. D.! It will effect more than the open sesame of the eastern story, or the power of Ariel's master, Milan's duke; for L. S. D. can open the way into hearts, and win affection, friendship, love—everything in this sublunary sphere. I had shoals of friends; my cash gone—they vanished. 'Twas ever so, 'twould be contrary to human nature to expect otherwise. Did I anticipate aught different? not I!—and only mention it to show what very nuck-worms we are with all our boasted attributes. I have been, indeed, a fool and a spendthrift; but yet have I the consolation, poor though it be, in the retrospect of the past, that I am alone the sufferer by my folly. How many are there regarded with an eye of commiseration in their ruin, whose career, under the semblance of random thoughtlessness, has been a career of intense selfishness,—indulging in enjoyments with means not their own, but which have been, perhaps, hardly earned by bitter sacrifices on the parts of others,—a career which has also its pseudo halo of generosity, where the good-hearted fellow wins his title by being generous without being just,—earning with the substances of others a false fame for kindness and liberality. Such was not the case with me. Such I have happily not to reproach myself with. And so, sir, in me you behold a broken man—broken in pocket, but not in spirit; no, no! for I have yet hope, sweet hope,

That kings makes gods, and meaner creatures kings!

Wearied of my itinerant career,—now lecturing, now playing,—I have resolved upon changing the scene,—have chosen Australia; and a week hence I shall be on my way to that so-called 'happy land.' Even should I not succeed in obtaining anything better, I understand that as a shepherd I am certain of employment. The stage of life is at best but a chapter of chances, and I shall quit my native shores with a happy-go-lucky sort of prospect before me,—not too hoping, nor too desponding; so that neither success nor failure shall surprise me!"

"Your misfortunes," I observed, when he had come to an end, "have certainly not taken all the steel out of you; is there not, therefore, a field for you in your own country? Why not make an essay at fortune here, instead of at the Antipodes?"

"Ah! sir," replied my battered-looking companion, after a short pause, "that is impossible; besides my own, there is no occupation here I could follow; for air, the free air of heaven, I must have, and liberty, the vagabond's liberty, if nothing better, but still liberty must be mine. Were you to see a specimen of my caligraphy, an excellent hand you would pronounce it, and worthy of a clerkship—but that is impossible. 'Day-book and ledger, avaunt! with your concomitants of close atmosphere and brick walls, whilst the hedges are clothed with green, whilst streams are laughing in the meadows, and birds are on the wing.' As well be immured in Chillon's lowest vault. Sweet freedom—if it be only in the streets—but freedom must be mine. Besides, to tell you the truth," continued the dusty traveller, after pausing to relight his cigar, which had gone out during his last rhapsody, "I am weak enough to indulge in a vague sort of belief that my fortune, by gipsy told, is about to be

verified, and that my going abroad is a part and parcel of the fickle dame's dispensation that is to be. You smile—but listen; 'brief let me be; the glow-worm shows the matin to be near,' or, in other words, I perceive by the milestone we have just passed that I shall soon have to leave you.

"When I was but a lad, on my father's farm there regularly encamped a party of gypsies. Just before I left home to enter upon the world, I was out one day shooting with a neighbour's son, a rude unlettered boor of a fellow, who had about as much feeling as his gun-stock. After some indifferent success in shooting small birds, as we passed the gipsy tent, a little ragged urchin came forth, and, accosting my companion, begged he would give him a bird for his dinner. He refused; and with a brutal remark to the bright-eyed though dirty little fellow, threatened to knock him down, if he did not instantly decamp. Indeed, he made such a show of carrying out his threat, as quite to frighten the child, for he was little better. I reproved him for his unmerited harshness; and, emptying my own pockets of the feathered spoil, gave them to the gipsy youngster. It appeared that the mother of the child had been watching us from the tent, and had overheard what had passed; for, as I turned away to follow my companion, I was arrested by the sound of her voice calling after me. She advanced close to me, and a finer specimen of the dark-eyed tribe I never beheld. With some remarks about my treatment of the boy, as compared with my companion, in which I was of course infinitely the gainer, she followed them up by requesting that I would allow her to inspect the palm of my hand.

"'Nonsense, I replied; your lad is welcome to the birds: I don't require payment for them by your telling my fortune. No, no, my good woman; excuse me, I have no faith in it; 'tis well enough for the lasses.'

"'I will not detain you a minute, young man,' she returned, with what I regarded at the time as an affected earnestness of manner; and taking my hand, which I did not attempt to withhold, she cast a hurried look over the palm, let it drop, and then turning her fine dark eyes upon me, full of friendly expression, exclaimed,

"'I wished it might have been better. You will have many trials, young man—you will have your pleasures, but pains will follow. Your heart will prove warmer than your head will prove strong; but this, mark, keep ever a good spirit. Your open hand shall be too open; but there is a rich wife for you, who will love you; and you shall find her in a foreign land, and be happy. You do not believe all this; but you shall find it come true.'

"How very ridiculous I then thought her prophecy, it is needless to say. As to quitting the country, it was the most unlikely of all her foretelling, as I never had entertained the most remote desire to go abroad. But mark what follows. Some years afterwards, during a short visit which I was paying a friend in the country, I chanced one day to be purchasing a pair of gloves in a shop in the town near which my friend resided. Whilst the very polite shopkeeper was waiting upon me, a gipsy woman entered, bearing in her hand some torn piece of dirty looking cloth, which had, it seemed, served as a wrapper of goods which the shopkeeper had received, and which, after the removal of the contents, had been left on the pavement at his shop-door. Holding it before her, and so extending it as to

show the man of the counter that in its torn and dirty state it was all but worthless, she inquired of him how much she should give him for it. Whether the glove-vendor entertained an antipathy to the tribe in general, or whether he considered his domain desecrated by the *entrée* of this gipsy in particular, I know not, but in a fierce burst of passion he commanded her instantly to replace the article from whence she had taken it, following up his command with an anathema against her race in general, as robbers and vagabonds all, that hanging was by far too good for.

"I saw nothing that the poor woman had done to justify the irate trader in his remarks, and whilst paying him for the gloves I had selected, remonstrated with him on his unjust severity.

"'Take the rag with you,' said I, turning to the woman, whose retreat my remarks in her behalf had arrested in the doorway. 'Take the rag with you, and I will settle with this gentleman for it.'

"I told the shopkeeper to take what he considered a fair value for the article, and whilst receiving my change, could ill-disguise the contempt with which I regarded his attempt to extenuate the coarse and unfeeling attack which he had made on the poor woman, who, with a hurried acknowledgment to me of my gift, quitted the place.

"Returning with my friend from a fishing excursion on the following evening, I was accosted by the same woman. When I tell you that she was volatile in her thanks, you will be prepared to hear also, that, as a slight token of her gratitude, she proffered to tell my fortune. Singular, too, that very day I had been relating to my friend the circumstance which I have just related to you of the first insight which I had received into my future, through a gipsy tale, and now, more to gratify his whim than my own, I stepped aside and held out my hand to the fortuneteller. You will smile when I assure you that she read the lines exactly as they had been read some ten years before. You may imagine that the seer was the same in both instances, and had it been so, there would of course have been nothing remarkable about it, but such was not the case; the gipsy who had now drawn the curtain of my fate was apparently about my own age—the one who had read my future when a boy was then old enough to be my mother. I should add, moreover, that the tribe to which the fortune-teller I am now mentioning belonged, had never migrated so far south as this county by a hundred miles, and the same people had regularly appeared in the quarter where my friend resided, since he could recollect, from his boyhood.

"And what was my impression after this second revelation you will naturally inquire?

"'All stuff, sheer stuff, sir; leave the country, never,' I exclaimed to my friend; 'had they wished me to believe, they should have hit upon some other more likely possibility.'

"And yet, as my friend remarked, it was not a little singular that at such a distance of time and place my future should have been read the same. What follows, however, makes it little short of wonderful!

"A few years since, and just as I was approaching the termination of my spendthrift do-nothing career, consequent upon my funds showing symptoms of exhaustion, I was passing over Norwood, with two companions who had, with me, been partaking of a champagne lunch at a mutual friend's in the neighbourhood, when we were accosted by one of the gipsy tribe, whose object was, of course, to tell our future. I should here

observe, that the dark-eyed oracles already mentioned both displayed in features the most favourable characteristics of their tribe, whilst the one who now approached us was, though still young, singularly unprepossessing. She was very importunate, and seemed determined, if possible, not to be shaken off. We were all very merry, and much more disposed to be generous than cross with the fortune-teller. After bantering her on her supposed powers of divination, one of our party, to test her ingenuity, offered to pay for our three fates being revealed, on condition that she should tell them in succession, and that we should stand together whilst the revelations were made. To this the weird sister at first objected, but seeing her chance of succeeding in her object on any other terms was hopeless, at last consented, and began her task. We stood together, and showed but little gravity, as you may suppose, whilst the dark-eyed sister mumbled out the first fortune. Mine came the last, and, not to be too proli., the Norwood gipsy repeated almost word for word all that the others had foretold. There was this remarkable difference : of my spendthrift folly she spoke as the past—the others had, alas! too truly told it of my future. Was it not strange? Can you wonder that I began to ponder deeply on the prophecy, and that I began to believe there might be something in it! And yet, even then, quitting my native land was the last thing in my thoughts. Gloomy as my prospects were at the time, I was more inclined to trust to a vague, undefined sort of future, wherein something advantageous might transpire, rather than to contemplate any definite course of action, least of all emigration. But the subsequent events of my chequered career have, indeed, given a colour to the prediction—fallen as I am, it is not surprising that I am now willing and disposed to believe what I had before treated as unworthy of a thought, and feel that, almost in spite of myself, my fate leads me ' over the waters of the dark blue sea.'

" See yon straggling-looking old building to the right in the hollow to which we are advancing," exclaimed my companion, suddenly changing the subject, and pointing out to me the object which a turn in the road had, together with an enchanting prospect, brought into view. " There the road branches off to the village I spoke of—there I shall leave you."

" How endearing! Oh, how touchingly beautiful to me is this well-remembered scene."

The player, with these words, ceased speaking. We were both silent for some moments gazing on the lovely expanse of pastoral valley which was spread before us, and when I turned again to address him, I observed a big round tear fall from the eye, and remain untouched on the dusty cheek of my fellow-traveller. I made some remark on the beauty of the picture we were contemplating; but he of the bundle was silent, and when, after a long pause, he again spoke, it was more as though he were giving utterance to his thoughts than addressing his language to me.

" Yes, one night more will I pass in the old house; once more ramble over the old haunts, and then a long—a last farewell."

" 'Tis but a melancholy pleasure you are picturing to yourself," I observed, when he again became silent; " such I should have deemed you would rather have avoided than sought, so cheerful, so philosophical as I had thought you."

" Ah, but what a contradiction is man," he replied, with a smile; " I shall leave the country all the better for passing a few hours in farewell

with the scenes of my childhood. Moreover, I have a strong desire to pass one night where I shall in fancy see my mother once again leaning over my pillow; feel once more her kiss on my cheek—the room of my boyhood's sleep, my boyhood's dreams. To the present tenant of the farm I shall be not altogether a stranger. My father's name is, I am sure, not utterly forgotten in the place, and I am tolerably confident that there is not a dwelling in the village where I shall not meet the kindest hospitality, though seeming, what in truth I am, a dusty vagabond."

We were fast nearing the point indicated by the poor philosopher to the coachman as the spot where he wished to alight, and whilst he was adjusting his bundle on his stick, I thanked him for the relation he had given me, and expressed, in wishing him good-bye, how much satisfaction it would have afforded me, to have had his companionship still longer, and that I most sincerely wished him success in his new undertaking.

"Thanks, many thanks," he returned, whilst taking the hand which I proffered him. "I appreciate your sympathy; 'tis like gently-falling dew to one's heart. I have read you the principal chapters from my book of life, and have only to regret 'tis an o'er true tale. But never say die. My colours I've nailed to the mast, and whilst there's a rag flying will stick to the craft. Good-bye! one more shake of your hand, and take with you my best wishes—a poor player's blessing!"

"All right, my pippin!" he exclaimed, addressing the coachman, as he reached the ground, with an attempt at gaiety in the tones of his voice. "Let them go."

And away again we went, leaving the dusty philosopher in the road waving his hand to me, until the Rover turned a bend in our course, and he was lost to view. Yet methinks I see him now, as I there last beheld him, with his dog Sancho at his feet, looking up in his face as though cogitating what would be the next step in the chequered and changing fortunes of his master.

RICHMOND.

A PASTORAL, IN PROSE.

BY MRS. WHITE.

WE sometimes wonder, in our city walks, if other passers-by are as sentient as ourselves to certain objects, whether the first-seen flowers of spring—"wan primroses"—wake up for them sweet visions of the woods, where these pale petals first disclosed themselves. Do they go forth in spirit to green lanes, where, furred about with moss, or daintily o'erlapped with loving leaves, the violet puts on her scented purple? Can the breath of hawthorn-boughs, fading, perchance, upon the sun-scorched flagging, waft them most magically to the margins of lisping brooks, the shady hedge-rows, and the outskirts of grassy mead-lands, where they grow? Will it shut out for them the noisy throng and crowded thoroughfare, displacing men and women with green trees, and spreading

forth a daisy-pied path upon some furlongs of the city pavement? Will it make fresh boughs shake and whisper overhead, and wake the cuckoo's note, now here, now there, as he plays hide-and-seek amongst the branches? Does it make visible pink clover-fields; and, with a gentle dissonance, the ringing of the whetstone on the scythe recal the warm-browed mower at his work? Will it image village children weaving daisy-chains; and sunburnt boys, round-faced as those that haunted old Silenus, "piping on oat-en straws," as shepherds did in the young days of Shakspere? Can it conjure, in exchange for shrilly cries, the rush of vehicles, and noisy barter, a choir of singing birds in some cool covert, the fife-like whistling of an orange-billed blackbird, the clear notes of the thrush, and that delicious, day-long anthem, the outpouring of the sky-lark's instrumental throat? Will these things do this transferring for other people, making the city as a solemn wood, and they the meditative wanderers in it? For us, so powerful are these flowery spells, floating us, as it were, upon their fragrance into the very midst of all these objects, that when the mental vision has passed by, there still remains such longings to be with them, that the sweet wish at length fulfils itself. Many a pleasant pilgrimage, many a summer's-day spent in the whiteness of pure thoughts and grateful communings with the fresh heart of nature, do we owe to such constrainings; and yet 'tis well if only dreamers are so acted on. What long days would those be in city offices if the poor clerk, in transferring from the flower-girl's basket a blossom to his coat-breast, dallied with thoughts like these. Must he lose "heartease" in wearing "*pensée*"; and, for love of a sweet-briar spray, have his desk haunted with Hamadryades? Suppose, too, if all were subject to such visitings, the especial sufferings of those gentlemen who, under the shade of tantalising boughs, have transacted business these months past.* There they stand, beneath "the emerald light of leaf-entangled beams," and yet no sign of "green and yellow melancholy," of "yearnings like the sailor's for the shore," attests the promptings of those leafy tempters. The breezy air that should whisper 'midst their branches, the odour of wild flowers at their feet, the chorus of the bees sipping and singing in their pendent blossoms (for they are lime-trees), sipping and singing, like the rejoicing hinds that *Gaen* tell of, who, finding mauna dropping from the forest, cried out for joy, that Jupiter rained honey! All these are wanting; and the close atmosphere, the glazed-out sky, and endless chink of gold upon the counters, might well induce conclusions dangerous to clerkly peace, and, by sheer force of contrast, occasion ceaseless dreams of sylvan places. But practical people are not dreamers; they take the great King Solomon's advice, and gather "the roses while they be blowing," without sighing for imaginary Bendimeers, or caring even to trace their whereabouts to the odorous rosaries, or cottage gardens, whence they came. To us those trees would whisper all day long of aisle-like avenues and shady places, of chequered light and shade in breezy motion, paving the soft moss velvet at their feet; we should see cerulean clusters of germander blooming beside the wrinkled primrose-leaves, and hear the trolling of the honey-bee gauging the depths of their melliferous blossoms. It was surely some such voiceless

* The clerks in the Receiving-office at the Bank.

persuasions that induced us to pass a self-made holiday this summer amidst the classic shades, the natural loveliness, and literary associations of Richmond. We had the "Seasons" in recollection; Lady Mary Montague, fresh as a breeze, and pleasant as a sunbeam in our mind's eye; and the old sweet air, "The Lass of Richmond Hill," ringing in our imagination's ears; and these associates, and the pastoral scenery that accompanied us on both sides of the way, almost from Vauxhall to the end of our journey, made as charming a prelude as might be to the intended entertainment of the day. It was a fresh delicious morning—one of those mornings when the very act of respiration exhilarates us—a little clouded, but with glimpses of blue sky, showing like cautious promises, *hardly given*, only to surprise us with unexpected munificence by-and-by. We are epicures in our mental pleasures; and, though we longed to make the view from the hill our own, we reserved the *coup-d'œil* for the grand dish of our feast, and turned into the green to refresh our historical associations, by a peep at the ancient archway, the last remnant of a regal residence at Shene. "The palace," says Camden, "stood a little east of the bridge, and close by the river-side, and was chiefly used as a nursery for our princes and princesses." Some of them, however, were confined here as well as cradled; and, during a portion of Mary's reign, it served as the prison-house of her sister Elizabeth. Very solemn, too, were the circumstances under which death made his visits to crowned heads at Shene—epics of history, they tell the touching moral of humanity stronger than state—of natural sorrow breaking down the artificial defences of rank, and forcing kings to find their level in affliction, like common clay upon the lap of Nature. Here Edward III. died of *grief*, for the loss of his warlike son; he of the chivalrous heart and sable armour, whose gauntlets and surcoat still moulder above his tomb in the cathedral at Canterbury. "Here also," to quote Camden again, "died the beautiful and *entirely beloved* Anne, queen of Richard II., daughter of the Emperor Charles IV., and sister to Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia. Upon this event, he had the palace rased to the ground, as if to revenge the misery he had suffered there, or to blot out (if it might be) the reminiscences the pile awakened; but Henry III. restored it. It is said, this queen first introduced the side-saddle into England, before which period, ladies sat their horses as peasant-girls in the interior of Spain continue to do their mules, *en cavalier*. Her death occurred in 1394."

Here, too, if Hume be correct, Elizabeth broke her heart at seventy, of vain regrets for the death of Essex. What years of agony were compressed into those hours, when she sat listening for every sound to bring the token ring, which, from the promise she had given him with it, might afford her haughty spirit a plea for pardoning the favourite—and when it came not, and the hours went by, and he was dead, the proud, huge, sullen grief, that only showed itself in never smiling more; and in the end, the stormy outbreak, the shaking the dying lady on her bed, who, in "*articulo mortis*," confessed to having kept the signal back from motives of political revenge. The after unavailing passion of remorse, the tossing on the floor of her chamber, the refusing sustenance and medicine—she who had worn her hair powdered with pearls, casting aside the pillows that afforded her no rest, and dying on the ground, amidst strewed rushes—what a scene is this of royalty reduced to womanhood, and yielding even

life itself in bitter retribution for its violated impulses! But to return from this digression. While we recrossed the green, the clouds, true to their prognostic, passed away, leaving the face of heaven serene, as if an angel's wing had swept it. The narrow pavements in the high street shone white, and the road towards the hill lay like a broad sunbeam before us. Pleasant houses, each in a flowery court, with windows languidly half open, and muslin draperies, or exterior blinds coquettishly veiling the interiors, stood on one side and on the other. Laburnums dripped their golden rain above the walled enclosures, which the vines had climbed, and were peeping over inquisitively; while the faint scent of the syringa, upon a basis of lime blossom and mignonette, was making the hill-side redolent with odour. It was a morning to thank God one was abroad in it, and though the way be none of the shortest, nor the road, under a mid-day sun, the easiest of ascent, one has but to reach the top when the burden of fatigue falls at his feet, and were it thrice as wearying he is compensated! Out upon those who, in the pure insolence of pedantic travel, commence comparisons to its disadvantage—a prate of majesty in the lap of loveliness—who, when you point them out the swelling outlines of its woody shapes, talk grandly of the peak in Derbyshire—and long you had but seen the Giant's Causeway. The hanging woods, the pastoral meadows, the enlinked Surrey hills, circling the view and blending it with heaven, the varied foliage, the shining river, are “pretty, certainly pretty,”—but then, what is it to the Rhine, with its crags and castles; the ruins of Rome, or the vast splendour of the mighty Alps? Their eyes have been so extended by the wonderful, that they see no charms in simple beauty, and wanting Olympus can never be content with Arcady. Give us that healthy appetite for nature that needs no stimulant to its enjoyment—an artist's eye for loveliness even in “minutiae,” who in the pencilled petals of a wild flower, the disposition of a fallen bough, the shadow of a drinking dove at the pool's brink, finds food for happy contemplation, and a most pure delight. Whether it is that the seats on the terrace offer themselves at the very moment that they are most desired; or that the soft luxuriant scenery they overlook compose the senses so entirely, that even our palpable flesh and blood is affected by it, but never had a “fresh tree's shade” appeared more pleasant, or rest more grateful, than that afforded us by one of the benches under the spreading boughs of a horse-chestnut tree.

From this point (the apex of the hill) says a modern topographer—but it must be before the leaves are out—“you have the bridge on the right; Ham and Petersham to the left; in the front, Twickenham and Pope's house; and at the extremity of the horizon, Windsor.” We confess to not having seen the bridge, between which and us a leafy screen extended; and, except a dim vision, shadowy and indistinct as the Delhi of our imagination, the towered heights of Windsor were also hidden from us; but we were too entrapt in present objects to regret the loss of a telescopic view, and feasted our eyes daintily with the living picture spread before us—from the park, downwards, stretching off towards the cordon of grey hills that bounds the sight, where woods, in all the leafiness of June, exhibiting every variety of shade and foliage—the bright green of the sycamore shining beside the massive plume-like branches of the wytch-elm—the drooping-boughs of the ash, neighboured

by aspiring poplars, and here and there a broad-armed oak (a *ylvan Hercules* beside a *Psyche*), appeared in juxtaposition with the soft, scented, fluttering leaves of the lime; then there were beech and maple, alder and aspen, with dusky firs masking it amongst them, and larches, whose last shoots seemed painted on the extremities of the old ones—hawthorn (sad-looking, having lost its flowers), with graceful rowans and elder-trees, showing white flakes of blossom; and many other “children of the wood,” making together so glorious a “viretum,” as would have charmed old Evelyn to see. Had we been near enough to mark the host of inferior vegetation, springing around, depending from, or adhering to, these pillars of the *ylvan* commonwealth, we should have found black briony, with dark and polished leaves, winning its way, like low-born industry (despite of difficulties) to high places; ivy, artistically tracing a delicate pattern on the elm’s rough bark; and lady’s-bower, arching from bough to bough, and strewing (as painters portray *Peace*) her frolic way with flowers: woodbine, too, like *Mercy*, bestowing graces on unsightly things, turning green leaves and knots of scented blossoms on seared and fallen branches, and clinging by them till they grow fresh and sweet from her pure fostrage. But we are running on, forgetful that “time and the hour wear through the *sweetest* day” as well as *roughest*, and we are yet no farther than the hill. Separating the eye from the woody steep, one knew where the villages of Ham and Petersham lay, by glimpses of red roofs, gable-ends of houses, and here and there a protruding chimney, sending up a respiration of thin blue smoke above the tree-tops; but an entire house, or even the profile of one, was not to be seen amongst the rich boscage that surrounded them. Meadows, in which the tall grass waved “lush and green,” extended in the bottom, and between these and the villa’d banks of Twickenham, the river, with its swans and pleasure-barges, and now and then a huge canal-boat, glided on, still and polished as the face of a mirror.

Free as a forester we trod the park, with its broad greensward, its shady avenues, deer-haunted dells, and lovely views; its bosky glades, smooth drives, groups of trees, and little dingles, like the diminutive valleys about Reigate that Aubrey speaks of, “stored with wild thyme, sweet marjoram, burnell and beechos.” Then we wandered by the riverside, with its grand mansions and fanciful cottage “ornées;” its smooth lawns edging the tide, and willows, with long fringy branches, dipping their leafy tresses like green-haired Naiads in it. An old man mowing reeds on a little island—a pagoda-looking place, all red paint and yellow-ochre—with a fisher under the shade of a group of poplars, were worth a painter’s sketching; and now and then a white-sailed pleasure-boat went by, or gondola-like barge, filled with ladies, under silken awnings; sometimes a single rower in a pram, and then a wherry full of laughing children, with a swan sailing dreamily in their wake. Roses shadowed themselves in the river, and artificial mounts and hedges of geranium glowed scarlet in the sunshine, while clove-carnations, mignonette, and honeysuckle, breathed out their sweetness, as poets do their thoughts, spontaneously, and were no poorer for the world’s enrichment. Here and there in grassy paddocks (one could almost fancy they comprehended their effect in pastoral scenery) cattle, with sleek and dappled skins, had couched themselves, as if to serve for models to T. Cooper. The fish

leaped in the Thames, the birds sang in the trees, happy parties wandered or glided about, and appeared to visit each other from the river. It was delicious—lovely! and with our thoughts still floating refreshingly on it, we turned regretfully (for all the vernal grasses were in blossom) into the field-path from the shore, which leads by Lady Tollemache's demesne back into Richmond. But our regrets were transient; summer had thrown so rich a coverlet over the lap of Nature, that, where the hay-makers had not preceded us, the flowery plain that tempted Ceres from her mother's side was not more redolent of floral beauty than those green meads, crowfoot and scabious, and the broad-leaved plantain, with its feathery spikes of lilac fading into white, and scented like the “Shepherd de Madona.”*

With sorrel waving wide its crimson seed, and quaking grass for ever vibrating with gentle motion its thread-like stems and knots of heart-shaped florets, and holding up his rayed shield in the sun (a naked gladiator 'midst speared grasses), the ox-eyed daisy forced his bold way through, and hung on every hand's-breadth of the field his fair round disk, in sign of victory. In ready pools—haunts of night-loving moths and burnished dragon-flies (most sword and sceptre-like), the tall-leaved water-flag, with flower-crowned spadix, spread forth its triple “patines of bright gold,” the innocent regalia of our childhood, when we played kings and queens on thrones of hay. Ah, me! one must be dull as the “fat weed on Lethé's wharf,” an' he find not inspiration in such places. Every blade of grass is full of beauty, every flower-cup a living censer. The

winged inhabitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,

make every branch and hedge-row musical; while the blue nightshade's flowers and sunburnt honeysuckle, and pink and white wild roses, spread their efflorescence on every side, and make the gazer's heart o'erflow with happiness. Such, at least, were our sensations as we wandered on, “turning from flowers to think of Lady Wortley, and Pope, and Thomson, and of Walpole's visits to the “Villa,” and of Swift and Stella, and Sir William Temple's gardens at Shene, and his nice essays, full of philosophy and flower-love, our path the while leading through meads as lovely as the last; then to a long, neglected avenue, with lights and shadows quivering through the branches, and paving all the greensward at our feet; and so on, through fields with haymakers at work, and waves of scented herbage strewing them, till at last a shady lane, with meeting tree-tops, vocal as an aviary, and an undertone of bacchanalian bees finding their way irregularly home, brought us almost to the foot of the *Hill*, up which we climbed, to take a farewell look of all the beauty we had revelled in. The boats became more scarce upon the river, the foliage gradually darkened, and a faint haze filled up the openings in the distant hills, and, spreading to the woods, threw round their branchy outlines a purple glory; while in the west, cushioned on golden fleeces, the sun went down, and, as we turned away, a belt of gorgeous clouds, aureus, and pink, and topaz, lined with silver, the floating scarf of a departing iris faded away, leaving us nothing of our day at Richmond but the remembrance of it, and a desire, with quaint old Izaak Walton, to make a “recreation of a recreation,” and wish our friends a pleasant hour to read it.

* Sweet coltsfoot.

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF
PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XIV.

VAN DIEST no sooner left the Exchange than he hurried to the house of Cornelius, in order to satisfy, if possible, his curiosity as to the designs of the family respecting Margaret. He was doomed, however, to be disappointed. In vain did he angle for information, with a patience and perseverance deserving of better success; he could elucidate nothing; and his old friend, Cornelius, usually so frank and open, repulsed his advances with a sullenness quite foreign to his nature.

"They shall not foil me thus," thought Van Diest. "In the presence of his wife, Master Cornelius will not dare to speak; but if I can but get him to myself, alone!"

Hardly had the worthy burgher seized upon this prospect of appeasing his insatiable thirst after knowledge, than he applied all his ingenuity to the task of withdrawing Van Meeren from his home. This he found more difficult than he had anticipated, and was obliged to make use of many a *finesse* to accomplish his desire. But he was now in his element; and when at length he bore away the reluctant Cornelius, he left the house more delighted with the result of his visit than if he had actually obtained its object.

When the mother and daughter were left to themselves, they fell back into the silence and abstractedness from which Van Diest had aroused them. The wheels turned round actively, and the fine white thread looked glossy as silk, as, escaping from their busy fingers, it entwined itself round the ebony spindle. An unusual length of time was allowed to elapse before the silence was interrupted. It was Mistress van Meeren who broke it.

"You see, Margaret," she said, in a sharp, discontented tone, "all the town believes we are about to do a wise thing by you. People would not take up a notion of that sort so positively, if common sense itself did not suggest it."

"But, dear mother," said Margaret, with a smile, that rather hovered around than settled on her lips, "is our good neighbour the safest interpreter of what the world says?"

"Oh, yes," said the mother, with some show of natural shrewdness, "for he only repeats what he hears—he never has a thought that he can call his own."

"But," urged Margaret, "may not the report originate in idle gossip, founded upon appearances?"

"No, Greta; it originates in the belief that every mother, in my difficult situation, would jump at an opportunity of gaining such a protection for her daughter as Lopez' love affords. Everybody in this world is inclined to think that others will act as they would themselves in similar circumstances."

"Surely I am not in such need of protection," said Margaret, raising

her head proudly. "We have numerous friends both here and at Mechlin, where your patrician connexions give us some right to expect—"

"Nothing," interrupted Mistress van Meeren, pettishly. "Had not my patrician relations been ruined, then, perhaps—but everything would have been different in that case. Poverty, you well know, has dispersed them so completely, that I am not myself aware whither they have wandered, or where I could, at the present time, find any remnant of them. You know how very limited is your father's family—blood relations, indeed, he has none, except your uncle Paul; for, strange to say, ever since their grandfather or great-grandfather, I scarcely know which, first settled here, the Van Meerens have never intermarried with any family of Antwerp; thus, they stand now as much alone as did their ancestors when they first settled here. But, were it otherwise—were our friends bound to us by the nearer ties of consanguinity, what would that matter? Who thinks of others when people have so much cause to think of themselves?"

"I confess I cannot bring myself to think so lightly of myself or others," said Margaret, with pique, "as to imagine that we could not find a person of pretensions, somewhat superior to Chievosa's, to—to—"

"To marry you, you would doubtless say," replied the anxious mother. "Alas! were times different, I should indeed agree with you. With your personal advantages—for you are very much what I was at your age in that respect; with the additional weight of a large fortune, and an education such as very few girls in Antwerp can boast—although their accomplishments are proverbially greater than those of women elsewhere; with all these good reasons for ambition on our part, I should certainly not only have looked higher for you than Chievosa, but very high indeed. Less than a patrician, I think, I should not have accepted." Mistress van Meeren paused in her work, and thoughtfully raised her eyes to the ceiling. After a few minutes of reflection, which her daughter did not choose to interrupt, she continued:—"Many men have married for love, and for money too, far beneath themselves. I have heard that a Count of Gueldres once married the daughter of a merchant, to obtain her wealth."

"That was in days of yore," said Margaret, with a sigh.

"Our days are not without examples of the same kind," said the elder lady, still bent upon a train of thought but too familiar to her mind. "In your case, Greta, fate seemed to foretel one as plain as fate can speak. The ring that I have so often mentioned to you—"

"Belonged to a house," said Margaret, "too exalted for any chance, however extravagant, to connect with mine."

"Ay, but the omen of a count's coronet may apply to any count, and Chievosa is surely closely connected with some noble house. That cannot be doubted."

"At least, there seems much reason to think so," said Margaret, musingly.

"But putting aside all Chievosa's supposed advantages," said Mistress van Meeren, more seriously, and approaching nearer to her daughter, "the *real*, the undeni able one, is his being a Spaniard."

"I have heard," said Margaret, "that the king persecutes as many in Spain as he does here. There are many Spanish Protestants, mamma."

"Yes; we have some even among the merchants established in this city; but Lopez Chievosa is none of them. He is a true Catholic."

"So am I. He has surely not the advantage of me in piety."

"Perhaps not," replied the fond mother; "you are a good, pious child; but I see I cannot make you understand my apprehensions. Your utter want of experience puts you beyond the reach of truth and conviction, Greta; your filial obedience and duty ought to make you trust me implicitly with the guidance of your fate."

"Then you do wish so very much for this marriage," said Margaret, looking up into her mother's face with an expression of deep affection.

"Ardently, Greta," replied the mother, returning her gaze with ten-fold tenderness; "and that for your own dear sake, even more than for my own. Oh! why will you not believe me, my child?"

"Because," answered the young girl, after a slight hesitation, "not only does my uncle Paul oppose it, but even my father does not take your view of the subject."

"Alas! that they do not. How shall I find words to convince you, for your own good, of the danger in which, though a good Catholic, you may stand. Innocence is not always a safeguard. I could tell you that which would convince you if it were not so sad a tale, and one that I was especially to keep from your knowledge; and yet I do not know why I should not give my whole confidence to my only child, when of an age to deserve it. But then, on the other hand, being the private history of your uncle Paul, it almost seems as if it were not right to reveal it without his leave."

"The history of uncle Paul!—the reason why he is at times so sad—so abstracted—why he has not married, and has led so joyless a life? Oh, mamma! surely—surely there can be no harm in your telling me that!"

"To say the truth, I can see none, for the affair was public enough, although, out of respect for the feelings of your uncle, we have always considered it in the light of a family secret."

"You excite my curiosity more and more," said Margaret, eagerly; "although, ever since I can remember anything, I have longed to know the secret of uncle Paul's sorrow."

"If it were merely to gratify your curiosity," said her mother, "I should scarcely like to speak of it; but the sad story, which has always stood before my eyes like a terrible warning, may also carry a moral of prudence to your young heart, of which I think you stand in need. You must know, Margaret," she began, with the tone of one about to expatiate on something at great length, "long before I was married—nay, before I even knew your father, when he and Paul were yet very young—by-the-by, I should not forget to tell you that you had an elder uncle, or great uncle—some relation, I scarcely know in what degree, for it is a matter on which I never could obtain exact information, it is a sore subject with both brothers; in short, this member of the Van Meeren family, be he who he may, disappeared in a very mysterious manner; that is to say, he went away one fine morning and never came again, nor was he ever after heard of in these parts."

"How strange!" exclaimed Margaret, who, having laid aside her spindle, was listening with eager attention.

"Well, in consequence of this event, at least so I understood, the

whole fortune and business devolved on your father and uncle, in spite of their youth; but by the manner in which they set about all things, every one declared they were wise, steady, and prudent, and they soon won general esteem and confidence. They were then equally active as to business. Their tastes led them, however, to seek their diversions in very different circles. I must not omit to mention that, at this time, both were strict and zealous Catholics."

"My uncle Paul a Catholic!" exclaimed Margaret, in much surprise.

"Yes, my child," and, as I have been told—for, I repeat it, I knew him not in those days—a very warm one. My husband was then, as now, passionately fond of music, and spent most of his evenings fiddling with Van Diest, then a gay, little young sprig about town."

"I can never imagine him young," said Margaret, with a half smile.

"It is difficult, Greta, for the growing generation to imagine that those who seem to them so full of years and of heaviness have been what they are themselves, as promising, as full of hopes. But time comes for all; it will come for you, too, as for poor Van Diest, though you be so proud of happy seventeen. But as I was saying, your father and his particular friends—poor Cornelius Grapheus was of the number—used to while away time with music, and attending all the weddings and christenings to which they could get invited. In short, he led an active and a merry life, though always within the bounds of the strictest propriety and soberness. Not so your uncle. His graver disposition led him to avoid public and frivolous amusements, and he soon formed an intimacy to which he devoted every leisure hour. There dwelt then within this city a family called Van Hoven. They were country-people, as I believe, who spent some years here merely on account of the public schools the town then abounded with, and by which they were desirous that their children should profit. They were not rich, but in easy circumstances; and as they grew up, the daughter became as celebrated for her beauty as the son for his abilities, and the world called the Van Hovens happy parents. Somehow or other, powerful protectors offered themselves for the one, and many suitors for the other; but Floris had not yet chosen the career he meant eventually to pursue, and Anna refused many an advantageous match. This part of her conduct is easily explained, when I tell you that your uncle Paul had become first her brother's favourite and then her own. She is said to have been of a grave disposition, but of surpassing gentleness, and devotedly attached to your uncle. You, who know how affectionate he still is to those he loves, even now, when sorrow and time have warped his temper and cooled his heart, may imagine how powerful was the feeling that bound him to Anna. Floris, who you will be astonished to hear is no other than Father Eustace——"

"My own Father Eustace!" cried Margaret, still more astonished.

"Father Eustace, of the *Prémontrés*, then the most comely youth in Antwerp, as his sister was the fairest girl. He, too, could have furthered both his ambition and interest by an advantageous alliance, and was so gentle and clever that he was a universal favourite even with the old. Floris, then, was Paul's bosom friend. Their minds seemed more congenial than those of the brothers, so that, at this time, my husband in great measure lost sight of Paul, except during the hours of business. What the priests call heresy, and the lenient denominate the Protestant

faith, was fast spreading in Antwerp, by means of the foreign traders and the youths that had travelled abroad ; and the pope, the emperor, and all the people in authority, were greatly moved. At length the emperor, wishing to bring the matter to a conclusion, fulminated his terrible edicts against the Protestants."

" What were those edicts, pray ? "

" They were cruel beyond all belief. Every look, every word, became a crime, and was punished with death in one way or another. To speak kindly of a Protestant ; to open, perchance, a book of their tenets ; to suffer one who was in the least connected with such matters to cross our thresholds ; to give bread, meat, or water to one of this sect, even were he starving by your house-door ; to speak one kind word—all these, and even less offences, were visited with loss of life upon the offender, and of property upon his survivors."

" How dreadful !" exclaimed Margaret, deeply interested.

" The Van Hovens and the Van Meerens felt much sympathy with the general woe these harsh measures spread through the land ; but still they entertained no personal apprehensions, for they were not only firm adherents to the true faith, but also not, in the slightest degree, connected with any one of the persecuted sect : thus, though sorrowful, they were not afraid ; indeed, so full of confidence were they in their own innocence, that Paul and Anna became betrothed in the midst of this public calamity. You may imagine to what a height this rose, when I tell you that the present persecutions have been, until now, but shadows of what they then were. I have been told by those who knew it well, that no less than sixty thousand people perished in the flames, and one-half of the victims were women and children."

" It is horrible !" again exclaimed Margaret.

" Yes ; but Greta, the flames were not the only means by which victims were done to death ; many and various ways, all equally horrible, were resorted to. Poor Anna perished by the most cruel of all."

" Oh ! pray mamma proceed," urged Margaret, eagerly, as her mother paused a moment.

" Yes, it was horrid !" she continued, with a slight shudder ; " and that, too, for a trifling cause. She was too soft-hearted—that was her only fault. One summer evening Floris and Paul had gone forth together. The parents, too, were from home, and Anna sat alone by her window, working at some little article of dress for her approaching nuptials, and little dreaming of what fate had ordained for her. Occasionally she cast a glance without to see if Paul were coming. The street was no thoroughfare, yet it struck her it was unusually empty ; but she fancied the fineness of the weather had tempted the people to walk abroad. The house of the Van Hovens formed a corner, and was divided by a dark narrow lane from the neighbouring one—the high back wall of a third house ended the lane rather abruptly, so that it had no issue, except towards the street ; it was, I believe, for the most part, used to throw filth into from the kitchens that overlooked it. The room in which Anna sat commanded a view of the main street, but led by a small door into the kitchen, which, as I have told you, opened on the lane. This minute description is necessary to make you understand what followed. Anna was, then, gazing listlessly into the deserted street, up the whole length of which she beheld no living thing but a miserable, squalid-

looking dog, crawling fearfully along the pavement, evidently so feeble from hunger that it could scarcely stand steady on its paws. It sought in vain among the occasional heaps of rubbish it encountered for scraps of food that chance might have thrown there, until it came opposite to the window at which Anna was sitting. The poor creature's intelligence was sharpened by its suffering—it paused, and looked wistfully up into the young girl's face. Its look was so full of pitiful meaning that Anna rose and hurried to the kitchen to fetch it some food. She could not instantly lay her hand on what she sought; she was, indeed, so long about it that she feared at her return the starving dog would be gone. But no—there he still sat opposite to the house, watching the windows with steady vigilance. Anna~~threw~~ him bread and meat, which the poor beast devoured in a manner that showed how cruelly her help had been needed. When the first irresistible impulse of nature was satisfied, the animal began a strange by-play that puzzled Anna not a little. It would not eat what she next offered, though evidently not yet satiated, but looked wistfully across the street—whined and barked by turns—then ran in and out of an obscure alley, nearly opposite, with increasing restlessness and agitation. Anna coaxed in vain—the animal looked grateful, but not satisfied; until at length the mystery was solved by a man cautiously emerging from the obscure alley, and advancing with a stealthy and feeble step towards the place where Anna had flung the broken viands to the dog. She shuddered at the sight. Although she had heard such calamities were of this world, never before had she beheld a human being starving. The deadly pallor, haggard looks, and, more than all, the manners of the man, went to her heart more than could have done the most touching entreaties. He was frightened and wild, like a cowed hound after he has felt the lash, and threw himself on the fragments left by the dog with a brutish delight, which it sickened Anna to behold. Her eyes filled with tears—the miserable object of her pity had evidently observed her, but retaining his humble aspect he did not even attempt to excite her compassion further. She remained for some time in doubt how to act. He might—nay, surely, he must be a heretic. No man, however destitute, could wander through the prosperous and charitable city of Antwerp in such utter helplessness but one of that unfortunate creed. She hesitated; but when she saw the but half-satisfied animal watch with evident delight his master finishing his own limited portion, not even attempting to touch another morsel, the instinct of the brute put to shame the humanity of the Christian. Anna's feelings grew stronger than her prudence, and she ventured by signs to make the man understand her sympathy for him. He seemed at first too astonished and fearful to credit the evidence of his own eyes; but when he did, he uttered no sound, but mutely raised his hands to heaven, and stood for a moment as if lost in silent thanksgiving. He then followed Anna's cautious direction, and turned into the dark lane behind her house. Her next act was to fly to the kitchen-door, open it, and gaze warily around to see if there were any one near who could watch her proceedings. Satisfied with the result of her examination, she bade the sufferer enter. He was so weak that he could scarcely articulate. Carefully shutting themselves in, secure of being now beyond the reach of observation, Anna administered to his wants. Perceiving that the good old wine, of which she had forced him to partake, revived him, she hastily thrust two bottles into a hand basket,

and adding more provisions for master and dog—for she could not overlook the faithful creature who had first drawn her attention towards his owner—she asked the man what she could do more. He explained that she had been that day the means of preserving his life, for he was actually perishing of hunger; that none would, or dared, to relieve his necessities, though he had many blood relations in Antwerp; that he could not even obtain the shelter of their stables or kennels for a night's rest, and had wandered about for weeks like a houseless, masterless dog, none remaining true to him but his own attached cur, whom nothing could tempt from his side. If, he added, she felt any desire to prolong his worthless life, the only available manner would be to bestow upon him the means of flight—money. Anna had none at her disposal. The case was urgent; time was flying fast; what she had already done urged her on to do more—she gave the stranger several trinkets, of much value, that decorated her person, the many gifts of Paul."

"Poor uncle!" murmured Margaret, involuntarily.

"Yes, it was a walk that cost him dear. The man, much refreshed, left her with a thousand blessings, and Anna anxiously watched his safe departure from under her roof. It was when he had quite disappeared from her sight, and not till then, that she began to feel uneasy about herself. You are just the girl, Greta, to have acted as she did."

"Certainly, mother!" said Margaret, with a glowing cheek.

"Listen, then, to the sequel, and you will see how miserable was the result to herself. By a chance, not unusual with him, Paul did not accompany Floris to his home that evening; and the brother, eager to pursue a favourite study, did not approach his sister. Anna retired for the night with her little episode, and fears for its consequences, still undivulged; for to her parents she dared not confess what she had done. Imagine, then, the surprise of all, when the next day Anna was dragged from her home by men of justice, as they called themselves, and thrown into prison, upon the accusation of having fed and relieved a heretic preacher, and favoured his flight. In vain did she plead her ignorance of his real character, and of his plans. In vain did she assert—what after all was but the plain truth—that she had merely thought of relieving a starving pauper, and had done so for the love of God. But truth was unavailing; so were the intercessions of her friends. Paul would have spent every farthing—reduced himself to utter beggary—to save her. Floris would never have asked another boon of his powerful patrons. But, alas! money and friends, everything was vain; even her innocence availed her not. The proofs were easily found—had there been none, it would have been all the same—as in so many other cases. A curious neighbour, or an idle, gossiping, serving-wench from over the way, had, doubtless, betrayed her; for none else could have so narrowly watched her movements and remain unperceived. Witnesses, however, were found in numbers to what two persons, at most, might have discovered. Besides, Anna never denied the fact. The man, too, was traced, though not caught, and the trinkets were seized, by the sale of which he had contrived to support himself until he reached the coast. He was, indeed, saved—but Anna lost! The friends of the family proved so clearly that her parents, as well as Paul and Floris, had had no share in the transaction, and that they were, moreover, unimpeachable Catholics, that they were not included in the trial which ended in Anna's condemnation. I cannot

tell by what means her lover and brother got speech of her in her prison, *but they saw her constantly.. Their grief far exceeded hers. I have been told she was placid and resigned like a saint, even unto the end.* She merely entreated, as the last and greatest favour, that Paul and Floris should be present at her death, and not leave her until all should be over. This request she made in such passionate terms that they could not refuse, although they both felt they never could recover the shock. The next morning Anna was led in great pomp to the place destined for her execution. It had often served of late for similar purposes, and the people flocked as to a procession, to obtain a view of her death. I cannot understand them, I confess; Paul and Floris went to accomplish a duty, but the others—well, I suppose many went the same way afterwards. It was before some gate or other, I forget which—without the town, but close by the *fossés*—that a moderate sized hole had been dug, sufficient for a tall woman—for Anna was of a good height—to stand in, her head scarcely reaching the top. Paul and his friend contrived, in spite of all impediments, to stand close by the pit. There were men provided—I wonder there were any found cruel enough—to throw the freshly dugged earth upon Anna until she should be completely buried beneath it; it was then to be stamped upon until the ground became firm, and the place watched, until those who might wish to reopen the grave should find nothing within it but a corpse."

"Great God!" ejaculated Margaret, pale and breathless, as she clasped her hands tightly together, and leant back in her chair as if overpowered with emotion, "are such things possible?"

"They are, my child—all evil is possible to man. Thank God, I never knew her, or I could not tell the tale as I now do. Anna made a last protestation of innocence, also a solemn declaration of dying as she had lived in the Catholic faith—forgave her enemies, and intreated her friends to remember that God had permitted her death, and in such a manner, for the weal of her soul, and had thus distinguished her, humble as she was, to exalt her to the lot of the saints. Her last words were very impressive. She had previously made many and touching recommendations to Paul and Floris in private; but this, her public farewell, drew the sympathies of all towards her; besides, she had never appeared so beautiful. Indignation was general—murmurs were loudly heard—they rose even to imprecations—but no effort was made to save her. She was placed in the pit, her hands were crossed meekly over the crucifix, and, keeping her eyes on Paul, who had obtained such a situation as that she might see him to the very last, her martyrdom began. Shovels of earth were thrown in upon her, slowly, as upon the dead, until nought remained uncovered but her face: she murmured audibly the name of Paul, and shortly afterwards her lovely countenance was concealed from view. Nature became stronger than will; the earth was seen to heave with her convulsive movements; still Paul and Floris stood firm. But when the monsters, to conclude the horrid sacrifice, began to tread upon the earth that concealed her, Paul raved like a madman—his friends had the greatest difficulty in leading him away in time to prevent his fury becoming positive insanity. Floris fainted. The place was closely watched. Your father, who had witnessed his brother's cruel trial, hovered in vain round the spot, in the hope that, unsuspected as he was, he might have a chance of removing her remains; but when the little mound was left free it was indeed a

grave. Around it soon appeared many others, enclosing more and more victims; the youngest, loveliest, and most inoffensive were soon laid side by side with Anna, all perishing by the same horrid death, but none more fair or more regretted. Well," continued Mistress van Meeren, who saw that Margaret was too much moved and agitated to make any observation, "sorrow acts very differently on diverse characters. Not one of those who loved Anna grieved for her alike. Paul, after a short time, went over to England. It was then that the Sturgeons became his best friends; I believe they were very kind to him—that he owes them much." He spent there a few years, then came home an altered man in every respect, a stubborn heretic—a discontented subject—a determined enemy to power and all those who possess it—full of opposition, suspicion, gloom, and all sad things; in short, an unhappy man. The shock had been great to Floris; too gentle to entertain the same lasting bitterness of spirit as had Paul, he grew too timid to trust life again—he withdrew from it completely. He took the vows at the monastery of the *Prémontrés*, where, as I have told you, he has been long known and beloved under the name of Father Eustace."

"How they must have suffered!" said Margaret, through her tears, that were falling fast.

"Doubtless they did; but their grief was nothing—*nothing*, Margaret, believe me, compared with that of Anna's parents. No one saw it, it is true; but I have often pictured it to myself until I could have screamed with horror at the ideas my own fancy conjured up."

"And what became of them?"

"They fled the very night previous to their child's execution. Floris never could re-enter the house, which became confiscated; but when the officers of justice took possession, they found all the rings, gold chains, medals, everything valuable that they had possessed—all their fine clothes, and more money than one even suspected them to have; so that they must have wandered forth like beggars over the land. No one ever heard of them more. Doubtless, they did not long survive their beloved child! Oh! Margaret, how often have I thought of their feelings in that dark night, and on the ensuing morning! I could not have survived it! It was this dreadful warning that made me tremble, when most other women would have rejoiced, when a daughter was born to me. That was what made me so anxious about your religion—induced me to implore Father Eustace to maintain you in the true faith. Alas! more, I am afraid, out of concern for your temporal, than your eternal, welfare. Even in past days of peace and happiness the remembrance of this sad scene has made me anxious and fearful. And now, my child, you know *why* I so ardently wish your marriage with Chievosa,—*why* I am so anxious to see you settled beyond the chance of harm. Margaret, I could not survive such an event! You cannot understand my feelings now; when you are a mother, and then only, can you imagine them. Grant me, dearest, what I ask of your love, when I might demand it of your obedience."

Margaret was deeply affected by the tale she had heard, passing gradually through all the phases of interest, from mere curiosity to real and heartfelt sympathy. Her tears had flowed freely on the sad narrative of her uncle's misfortunes; but possessed of much of his indifference to

danger, or perhaps merely influenced by the ardour of youth, she did not suffer her mind to dwell on the possibility of her own fate, in any way, resembling that of Anna.

"My poor, poor uncle!" said she; "and did thus happiness pass from this world for him, without even leaving a trace of its having existed? And Anna—where is her grave? I shall go and pray over it, and bring her memory the offering of my tears."

"I am not even aware before which gate the tragedy was enacted, and so many graves surround hers, that the exact spot would be difficult to find, except for those most interested. For others, perhaps, the very memory of that fearful event has long since died away. The house in which she lived has been demolished, and a new street has been made upon the place where it once stood."

"Poor Anna! There is, then, no memorial of her remains on this earth, except in the hearts of her brother and poor uncle Paul!"

"There is yet one," said Mary, involuntarily sinking her voice, and bending nearer to the ear of her daughter. "Shortly after all was over, one of our best artists, who had been her friend, was commissioned to make a picture for one of the side-altars of our cathedral. St. Catherine's martyrdom was to be the subject of the painting. He availed himself of the opportunity to commemorate that of Anna. The saint bears, it is said, a most striking resemblance to the unfortunate girl. In features, in expression, the likeness is perfect: some persons say most of the figures in the picture are portraits. At one time people flocked to see this piece; but the affair has long since sunk into forgetfulness—as all things do, however much they may excite public sympathy at the moment,—and few can now tell what it really represents. Your uncle Paul at one time dared not even go near the church."

"I have never prayed at St. Catherine's altar," said Margaret, pushing away her spinning-wheel and rising, her recent tears still hanging like dewdrops on her eye-lashes. "Poor uncle!"

"Say, rather, poor Greta!" replied her mother. "Oh! my child, if this cannot touch you, I have no words left with which to persuade or entreat. I have often pictured to myself your father and me flying through the dark night like *them*, and standing at daybreak, hand-in-hand, by the side of some dark waters, childless and alone; and I have thought that, in such an hour, the spirit of evil might tempt me, and I have shuddered at my own thoughts, and prayed to the Lord that they might not weigh against me as a sin. Oh, Margaret! Margaret! think of me—think of your father."

At these words Margaret threw her arms round her mother's neck, and, concealing her face in her bosom, sobbed aloud. At that moment the door opened, and Cornelius remained for a minute a silent and astonished spectator of the scene within. But the flood-gates of confidence were opened, and the father, whose heart was full of uneasiness, soon joined his influence to that of the mother. He had heard alarming rumours about town; and he could almost forgive Chievosa for being a Spaniard, so eager was he to ensure a protector for himself and his house.

CHAPTER XV.

"THE council has indeed been stormy," said the Count of Egmont, as he sank into a richly-carved chair, and leant his head upon his hand, whilst his elbow rested on a square table placed before him, an air of fatigue as well as thoughtfulness clouding his open brow.

"I have not, then, proved a false prophet," replied his secretary, whose whole appearance plainly indicated that he had not been in attendance at the council. His habitual pallor was deepened into the sallowness of ill-health; a black velvet cap did not altogether conceal the bandages that bound his head; a long loose robe of rich material was closely wrapped around his languid form, and physical pain seemed to deepen the melancholy, habitual to his countenance, into positive sadness; yet his eye was lighted up by a strong interest, and framed the question ere his lips had time to give it vent.

"Yes," continued the count, as eager to communicate as the other might be to listen. "That fall from your horse at the very gates of Brussels was a most unpleasant accident—so severe a fall too---and at a moment when of all others you were most necessary to me. It was a foolish affair—you too, so skilful a rider—to spur your horse in so sudden and extravagant a manner. The animal, not accustomed to such usage, of course took fright—it was fortunate that you got off so cheaply."

"It was an involuntary movement on my part," answered the secretary, with a mournful smile. "I was absorbed in thought."

"That, too, when I was telling you of what lies so near my heart—when I was discussing the merits of my Isabel, and the happy and early chance I had of settling her in life. But you take interest in nothing but public affairs."

Deep crimson flushed the cheek of the invalid, and a half-suppressed sigh escaped him; but the count noticed neither, and continued—

"Remaining so long a bachelor is not a good thing, Casembrot; it will gradually cool the natural warmth of your heart. I have long thought of you, too, my friend; your happiness concerns me as much as if you were a child of mine."

"You are too good," hastily answered the sick man, "much too good, my lord, to think of me at all, more especially at so critical a moment as the present.. My happiness is, and will be to my latest hour, wrapt in the glory and safety of yourself and your house. But, as you say public affairs go first with me, pray tell me, how went the day?"

"It was the winding up of last night's council, which the lateness of the hour alone interrupted. I would have consulted with you on my return, for I scarcely closed my eyes even during the few hours allotted for rest; but, in your present state of suffering, I would not deprive you of your repose. We all spoke rather freely our minds—I especially—more so than, I dare say, you would have called prudent; but Orange led the way. He advanced more boldly—more to the point than any of us. All the friends of the princess, all the hangers-on upon the court, as I may call them—Barlaimont, Croy, Meghen, strenuously opposed the admittance of the confederate nobles into Brussels, as being unsafe, and allowing them too great a latitude. The Prince of Orange pleaded their rights as gentlemen and loyal subjects, saying that, as such, they were

entitled to present petitions when and where they pleased ; that these gentlemen ought not to be doubted ; that many of them were his kinsmen and allies, nor could he permit shame to be cast upon them. He insisted that what they demanded was but justice, no less to the king than to themselves, as well as to the country at large. He spoke warmly, eloquently, of the increasing evils brought by the Inquisition into this land ; of the uselessness of attempting to maintain an institution equally hateful to high and low ; how vain, in short, such an attempt would be, when none of the governors of the provinces, himself included (and he appealed to all of us there present), would consent to deliver over to the flames sixty thousand innocent men—innocent in all else but in matters of opinion. He declared it to be a severity as prejudicial to the interests of the king as to the welfare of the country, and that no true-hear-ed Fleming would ever consent to its being established."

"The prince, then, completely unveiled himself," said Casembrot, joyfully. "I knew that his countenance would never be withheld from his friends in the hour of need. What was the effect of his example?"

"It drew us all out, of course. De Horn spoke manfully, perhaps (I, at least, thought so) more bluntly than the occasion required. Mansfeldt moderated, and stood half with us, half with the princess; but the majority was on our side. I was half ashamed to see how clamorous we all grew; although opposed to a lady and a princess; how we forced our will upon her, I had almost said, in so ungenerous a manner. I confess I felt for her, standing alone, so slightly supported, against so many, when, one by one, those whom she or her brother had trusted turned against her. We plainly showed that she could and ought not to reckon on any of us. The Prince of Orange spoke for the governors of provinces; De Horn for the navy."

"And you, my lord," interrupted Casembrot, with anxiety deeply depicted on his countenance; "what said you for the army?"

"That I never would fight in favour of the penal laws!"

"It was a bold word, my lord," said the secretary, shaking his head gravely.

"Surely," said the count, with an air of unfeigned astonishment, "you would not have a Fleming force his countrymen into the flames at the sword's point!"

"God forbid," ejaculated Casembrot, "that so black a deed should sully a name so bright as yours! But, perhaps, you might have worded your determination more cautiously."

"It is not for an old soldier," said the count, with a smile, "to pick his words like a wily cardinal, or a mincing dame. My services in the field must excuse my roughness in the cabinet. It were well if all meant so honestly by their king and country as I do. No! I never will recal those words, nor even wish them unsaid; nor do I think myself in any degree the worse subject for being a true patriot. Philip himself cannot be so blind and unjust as to think so. No: I do not regret that. It was painful, but necessary, to oppose the overstrained zeal of the princess, and her too literal compliance with her brother's wishes. But what I really regret, and cannot think of without pain, is the rude, unmannerly way in which we all broke out with our private complaints and griefs against the king, in the presence of Madame de Parme, as if she were answerable for, or had any power to redress them. This, however, was the fault of the Prince

of Orange. He led the way, by detailing, one by one, every grievance, public or private, that he could think of since the king's accession to the throne. We followed up without pause or mercy. The princess bore it with a calm dignity that struck, I believe, her veriest enemies. Once only did her coolness fail her. It was when Orange assured her, in his deliberate, emphatic manner, that he knew to a certainty the king had nothing so much at heart as the ruin of the House of Nassau, and that he only abided his time to take his life. During his speech he kept his piercing glance firmly riveted upon Margaret. Then did her courage, for one moment, fail her—her cheek blanched—her eye drooped before his stern gaze, and her hand trembled. Barlaimont drew close beside her; she whispered a few words, to which he replied in a tone so low as to render it impossible for us to know what passed between them. Her weakness was, however, but momentary. It passed away without leaving a trace of its having existed. It was finally agreed that Brederode and his friend should be received, and a moderation of the edicts granted by the princess in answer to their request, which we all hope and trust the king may be led to ratify—a result of which the regent appears to entertain no doubt. Thus shall we deprive the confederates of every excuse for covert and illegal acts of aggression, and yet procure some ease to the oppressed people. This was the final decision; with which the princess was, or seemed to be, well satisfied, though many said she would have been more so with a very different issue."

"So far it is well," said the secretary, after a moment's pause. "You have to-day most gloriously silenced all the unfair calumnies that envy and malignity dared to throw upon your name at your return from Spain."

"Do you really think so?" exclaimed the count, joyfully. "That, indeed, was my chief aim."

"And," said Casembrot, continuing his own train of thought, and little heeding the interruption, "so long as you follow the footsteps of the Prince of Orange, little need be apprehended; but having once entered on the same path, it were most unsafe to deviate from it. Have you ever thought of this, my lord?"

"I will not trouble myself to think on such a subject," answered the count, haughtily. "I will pursue no man's road but so long as it may chance to be my own. But, Casembrot, I am thoroughly weary of public matters; let us recur for refreshment to those of a private nature. The bond of amity and brotherhood between the Prince of Orange and myself will be drawn tighter in one respect, at least, by the proposed union of his brother Louis and my Isabel. When last a Nassau sought a bride in our house, it certainly was not to his disadvantage. Many a fair estate, and many a bright jewel, did my cousin of Buren bring to William the Silent. My poor Isabel is far from being an heiress, God wot! and it is flattering to my paternal feelings to see her sought thus eagerly for herself alone."

"Your interest, my lord—your alliance may be of double value at the present crisis."

"You do not mean to insinuate," said the count, his eye flashing with anger, "that any one dares to dream of buying me over?"

Casembrot remained silent—too weak, perhaps, to venture on a topic so delicate, or knowing by experience that he was more likely to persuade

by silence than by words. The eloquence of a well-timed silence is but too little understood, or too seldom resorted to, in cases where it is important to convince; it is often successful, whilst eagerness generally defeats its own object. After a pause the count, seeing no further opposition was likely to ensue, resumed in a softened tone—

“Be the motive what it may, the offer is too advantageous to be refused; nor do I see anything objectionable in Louis of Nassau.”

“He is wild and reckless,” answered Casembrot, with energy.

“He is a soldier, and has more of the freedom of the camp about him than of the graces of the court. As to his being somewhat hot-headed, that is rather a merit in my eyes than a defect. It is pleasant in familiar intercourse to read the heart of a friend. I like not your covert, cautious man—he never belongs but to himself.”

As he spoke, the eye of the count fell full upon the pallid and worn countenance of his secretary. It might have been chance, yet Casembrot grew paler with a sort of undefined, yet uneasy consciousness. He shrank, nervously, from the honest glance of his patron, and articulated, in a low, hesitating tone—

“It is not always in man’s power to open his heart even to those who would have no right to blame what they found there.”

“I know of no such cases,” replied the count, bluntly; “I never hid my thoughts from friend or foe, nor can I see any reason why others should. Wiles and timid caution are only fit for the weak, and shame on the man who, directly or indirectly, acknowledges himself such.”

“Alas! I am afraid many feel themselves weaker than children in their secret bosoms, though they cover that weakness with steel and iron.”

“Come, come,” said the count, laughing, “this sentiment smacks too much of the sick couch. A few days of abstinence, and a few drugs from the apothecary, make women of us all; when you once more back a horse, and breathe the free air of the fields, mind and body will recover their tone. But some time must elapse, I fear, before you will be able to try their beneficial effects. Your hurts are too severe to allow of any trifling, nor shall I myself leave Brussels so soon as I had hoped; in fact, so protracted may be my stay, that I shall send off a messenger to the countess to beg her presence here, so you will no longer feel confinement irksome. Louis of Nassau must be allowed his opportunities.”

The invalid involuntarily started at this announcement; but the smile of pleasure that had lighted up his wan countenance faded away at this last insinuation.

“Be not too rash in this matter for God’s sake, my lord! The manner in which Count Louis has launched into actual opposition to the king’s wishes is so open, and his religious tenets are so obnoxious, that such an union might, if too hastily concluded, expose you to the king’s severest displeasure.”

“It is strange that this should never have occurred to me before,” replied the count, thoughtfully; “when now you point it out, it strikes me most forcibly. Yet, after having formally accepted his proposals, how to refuse without assigning what the Nassaus may consider a sufficient ground—how to do this with honour I cannot see. I should have thought of this before. Now the fiat is gone forth.”

“But surely you might urge your daughter’s disinclination—that is, in case any such should exist.”

"You are right," said the count, joyfully; "that I can do both in honour and justice to all parties, for it was a clause I always insisted upon; and I am pretty certain that Isabel, when left to follow the bent of her own inclination, will prefer her father's home to any other that may be offered her."

"That seems strange," muscd Casembrot, as if unconscious of the presence of his illustrious patron. "But," he continued in a louder key, "should the prince and his brothers ever form, as seems likely, a party against the king, and free the country of the Inquisition, and should circumstances as well as choice eventually bind you to the same course, then would this alliance secure, at Dillenburg, a safe home and a fitting one for your family—especially for Lady Isabel—during the commotion."

"Never!" exclaimed the count, with emphasis—"never! Should matters come to such a crisis—which I hope and trust they may not—never shall the enemies of the king be my friends and allies! Let others swerve and waver as they may, my course has been traced throughout these unhappy dissensions. Philip shall not make me a tool of persecution, nor shall any faction whatever make me forget what I owe to him."

"If that be your final resolution," said Casembrot, "you had better at once throw up all concern in public matters, and withdraw to the safe and pleasant shades of domestic retirement."

"I own I do not understand you, Casembrot; when I would have abstained from coming this time to Brussels, it was you who argued—who pressed the point."

"Because I had hoped, and fancied—it matters not what."

"Nay, I seek not to know it," said the count, dryly. "But time is wearing apace—you look very fatigued, Casembrot; I have been unconscionably egotistical in pressing upon you so long and so serious a conference. When my ladies arrive our spirits will become lighter. Without them this palace is dull indeed. I will now leave you, in order that you may seek repose."

CHAPTER XVI.

A FEW days subsequent to the conversation between Egmont and his secretary, the countess and her daughter arrived in town in accordance with her husband's desire, to whom the mere knowledge that they breathed under the same roof with himself was a comfort, and a few hours, after the pressure of affairs, spent in their society, a solace, which he would not have renounced under any circumstances. Yet it was but at rare intervals that he could enjoy the pure pleasures of his domestic circle. The agitation of the princess made council succeed council; and when Egmont had fulfilled his arduous duties at the palace, his friends still claimed his presence at their more private, but no less stormy discussions.

Not so with Casembrot. His delicate state of health was an apology for his confining himself completely to the house, and his patron had fulfilled his promise of making his enforced seclusion cheerful. Indeed, nothing could exceed the soothing attentions of the ladies of the family towards him. Although he well knew that this line of conduct was not quite spontaneous on their part, yet the gentle Isabel, and even the proud Sabina of Bavaria herself, threw over all their actions a grace of kindness that seemed to come from the heart, and accordingly found an echo in his own. He to whom for years the heart of the chief of this numerous

family had been open without reserve, and whose influence over him, however *unobtrusive*, was acknowledged, could not but be looked upon as one of its members; and his endearing qualities, and habit, that strongest of ties, had made him one of general esteem and love. Thus his subordinate situation was more overlooked by others, and less felt by himself, than might have been imagined.

He had at all times an easy access to the countess's apartments; but since her return from Purmerend, without any intrusive familiarity, which he would have been the last man to offer, and Sabina of Bavaria the last lady to endure, he might be said to have made them, in some measure, his own.

Within the limits of a small circular chamber (we should not now dignify it with a more pompous denomination than a closet), whose solitary bow window, so deep as to form a sort of second cabinet, overlooked the then large park appertaining to the mansion, the princess whiled away the hours which her own desire, and the season that detained most ladies of her rank in their castles in the country, made solitary.

Here she would employ herself upon some rich embroideries on which, also, not only her daughter, but her ladies busied their fingers. The chaplain, to pass away the time, would read, or talk of holy things, and Casembrot cheer them with his varied but, at all times, interesting conversation; or peruse, for their amusement, some one of those ponderous volumes of chivalric romance and lazy rhyme, which the taste of that day favoured. To vary these occupations, one of the ladies might, perchance, recount a tale, or Isabel sing, or when the countess was herself in a pleasant humour, she would, as much for her own satisfaction as for that of her listeners, dwell on the details of her brilliant espousals at Spire, which the emperor graced with his presence, and dilate on the reminiscences of the home and friends of early days, or, perhaps, on the still dearer and more exciting theme of her husband's victories. Although probably the ear of Isabel was familiar with each and all of these reminiscences they never fell unheeded, and whenever her father was mentioned the glow of filial pride was on her cheek, the smile of filial love played on her lip.

Such was the calm manner in which the hours of convalescence passed for Casembrot—but too lightly, too pleasantly—perhaps his mind was but in too great danger of becoming enfeebled by the very repose that restored the wonted vigour to his frame. It might be that some fear of this nature would occasionally force itself upon his mind, and cause the sudden start, the involuntary exclamation, which Isabel, construing into the expression of bodily pain, would hasten to soothe away with her smile or solicitous inquiries.

The little chamber we have described had become so familiar to Casembrot in the course of a few happy days, that he would linger there even when more active duties, or other chances, caused it to be deserted by its fair tenants.

One afternoon he was left to his solitary reflections longer than usual. The count was absent. The ladies he knew he was not likely to see until the evening repast would again reunite them; yet he could not refrain from visiting the loved little room which, however cheerless in its unoccupied state, still seemed to him less lonely than any other in the house. He passed there several listless hours; still time hung not heavily upon his

hands. He had been luxuriating in a pensive yet agreeable mood. His reviving strength had permitted, or rather prompted, his imagination to dwell on a thousand fancies, such as, it is generally believed, youth alone can indulge in; but those who have recovered from a great prostration of strength, oftentimes experience that the first impulses of recovered health bring youth to the heart as well as to the pulse. Reality has not yet resumed its iron sway—renewed and coming vigour flows in a warm tide to the head and heart, brightening the one and cheering the other, until it nerves the arm with its wonted energy, and runs in even streams throughout the system.

Casembrot was revelling in that spring-like mood of convalescence. His fancy threw a peculiar charm over all things. He gazed in lounging idleness over the large framework before which the tabouret stood, displaying proudly the deep gold fringe which the rich folds of the ladies' dresses generally concealed, and smiled at the fresh roses on the canvas, as though each reminded him of some dear face. He picked up carefully a little branch of box-wood which lay by the side of the richest and lowest of these settees, and gazing on it as if it had been a treasure, he lost himself in the softest, and apparently vaguest, of reveries. How long it may have lasted he must have been perfectly unconscious, for it was the early sunset of an April sky that awoke him from his abstraction. He rose from the chair of state of the countess, into which he had thoughtlessly flung himself, and turned into the recess formed by the window, to gaze on the mellow tints which the clouds reflected.

He was about to retire to his own apartment, when a light step, stealing behind him, made him start. His ear had not caught the sound until it was close to him. He hurriedly concealed the little twig of box within the folds of his vest; but his very brow flushed when, on turning round, he beheld, close beside him, Lady Isabel.

Despite the rigorous etiquette of those times it was impossible, whilst dwelling for years under the same roof, that they should not often have met alone, nor had he ever felt it embarrassing until this evening; but, whatever the motive for this new and strange state of feeling, he could not struggle with it so successfully but that it must have become visible, even to one so inexperienced as Isabel. She seemed, however, in no way infected by it; for her inquiry how he had managed to pass the live-long day without them, was accompanied by a gay laugh that rather tended to increase than diminish his confusion.

"I must learn to fall back on my own resources," answered Casembrot, with a slight sigh, "for the time is now fast approaching when I shall have no excuse left for devoting to recreation those hours which sterner occupations ought to fill up. I shall find the change hard at first, doubtless; and, perhaps, it had been better never to have accustomed myself to pleasures which I must now resign."

"Surely you would not wish to change your active life for a page's illness?" said Isabel, who seemed by no means inclined to give up the conversation.

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Casembrot. "No, I shall be glad, indeed, to resume the duties that bind me to reality. To dream away existence thus were dangerous. The mind yields but too easily to the repose of the frame, and a thousand visions rise up around one, as wild, as capricious, and as flitting as the clouds that obscure heaven—like them,

liable to be dispelled at every moment. Far better never to dream than to awake from imaginary bliss!"

Isabel was silent for a moment, then said, in her peculiarly soft manner—

"I do not agree with you. I consider each happy fancy, each gay hope, however idle the one and fallacious the other, part and parcel of our earthly happiness; and they who can surround themselves with a world of bright visions, however improbable their realisation, enjoy a portion of happiness unknown to duller minds. Besides, as my old nurse used to say, 'To think of good things brings them to pass.'"

"Deceive not yourself with so false a philosophy," replied Casembrot, with a mournful smile, "and seek not to mislead me. Alas! he who sets his heart on impossibilities, if he would not break that heart, must not teach himself to think them probable, but struggle manfully against the folly of his imagining—to yield to them is voluntarily sealing his own fate."

"Do you think one can escape it?" asked Isabel, with a gaze so fixed, that it was evident his words had turned her thoughts from himself to subjects that lay concealed within her own bosom.

"I cannot!" murmured Casembrot, to himself, rather than in answer to the words of Isabel. "For the strength that I would give worlds to possess—that strength which I feel to be man's dignity and worth—that strength, I have it not! I cannot hope; and yet I know not how to renounce."

There was a moment's pause. Casembrot's ardent gaze was fixed on Isabel; but she seemed unconscious of the fact; for the long dark lashes that fringed her deep, blue eyes, did not shade their brightness. She looked calmly, steadily, almost mournfully, in his face for a time, then said—

"Whatever may be your sorrows, believe me I feel for you most sincerely. But every one, I find by sad experience, must have their troubles in this world!"

"Surely yours, lady, cannot yet have begun?"

"Speak not thus, Casembrot; you know as well, if not better than I do, that changes in my own happy fate are in contemplation. Perhaps you yourself have advised the very measures I allude to; if you have not actually suggested them, at any rate you must be too well aware of their import to render your silence of much avail. You cannot deceive me. Why not be as frank as I am? I would not," she continued, crimsoning under the contrary impulses of her natural timidity and depth of feeling;—"I myself would not have brought forward such a subject, but that I knew you could not be ignorant of it. What, still silent?"

"What can I—what ought I to say?" replied Casembrot, with some embarrassment; "you state the truth so far."

"Well," she continued, "I am glad you acknowledge thus much. Now, I will ask you how it happens that I have lost so much of your friendship, that you seem to take no interest whatever in an affair of such deep importance to me—that you do not even think it worth your while to advise me, or to give me your opinion."

"What poor advice I had to offer has been freely given to the count, your father," replied Casembrot, in his usual grave and distant manner.

"How changed you or I must be, Casembrot," said Isabel, gazing

earnestly into his face. "A few years back how different you were—listening so patiently to all my childish griefs and joys—always protecting me against my impetuous brothers— instructing me in so many things I loved to learn, which no one, either at the convent I left so early, nor even at home, dreamed of teaching me! How you would delight in telling me of the bright stars above us, and their possible influence over our fates—of the hidden virtues of plants and stones—of the meaning of everything in nature; until I learned to love all things around me! Never would the equerry have overcome my childish fears had it not been for your help and care. You taught me to follow the hunters' horn and the baying hounds. For years have I thought what you bid me think; and now, suddenly, your counsel, your friendship, are withdrawn from me! Is all the past, then, forgotten?"

She uttered these words with the touching accent and look of helpless infancy; but Casembrot, with a strong effort, steeled himself against them, and said, in as cold a tone as he could assume—

"The change you speak of, Lady Isabel, is in yourself. You are gradually leaving childhood, its pleasures, and its thoughtlessness behind you; and the dignity, as well as the cares, of womanhood ought now to surround you."

Isabel felt the rebuke, for her pale cheek was crimsoned in an instant with the tell-tale blood, and she replied, rather hurriedly, "I consider myself still a child, and wish others would do so; for it were not fair to deprive me, in any way, of the kindness and indulgence to which I have been so long accustomed. I know nothing of the world; nor do I wish to know it—for many years at least. And does not ignorance of its ways preserve a lengthened childhood? You have so often said this that I have taught myself to believe it."

"I still think so; but time, like the tides of the sea, tarries for no man, and life's cares carry us along whether we will or not. Nor ought we, perhaps, to seek to withdraw ourselves from the current."

"I agree with you when we are able or fitting to struggle with life and its trials; but surely, Casembrot, there are some beings in this world whom Nature seems to except from that general law, and by bestowing on them no strength to endure, marks them as those to whom she would spare all conflict. Of these I fancy myself one."

"Who can tell, lady, what is fittest for us here below? That is a point too important for frail mortals to decide upon."

"And yet I cannot help fancying in the more thoughtful moods that have of late come over me, that a secret voice in every bosom tells what is fittest for one, and that, if oftener listened to and obeyed, each mortal might, perhaps, have it in his power to save himself from many a pang."

"Alas! it is by following blindly the dictates of our own hearts, that we make woes unto ourselves. But what can your young wisdom, Lady Isabel, suggest about your own path of life? You appear to have thought much lately on topics which I should have fancied farthest from your mind."

"And probably they would long have remained so had you not, with so rough a hand, disturbed my unconsciousness. There I was, all happiness in my own dear home, seeking and dreaming of nothing beyond its limits, bounding all idea of change to occasional visits to some of our fair

castles—of pleasure to a grand hunt with the princess, and hoping that years would thus pass by unnumbered by me, unmarked by pain or joy, except as my father's absence might bring the one, or his safe return ensure the other. I was all trust in him and in you, when I am awakened from my placid happiness by the sudden, and to me most new, thought, that I am not expected, not desired, to fill my place here for ever. My beloved father—my mother told me this—and you, too, Casembrot, have thought so. They have informed me that my brothers and sisters would in time expect to see me fit to another home. It is most unkind—most unjust. I am but seventeen, and have not been so long among my friends that they should already wish me away."

As Isabel concluded these words, her eyes were clouded with tears, and her voice faltered.

Casembrot was deeply moved. He had neither sought, nor wished to have that innocent young heart laid bare before him, and as he listened to her words, he felt as if he were usurping a right not his own; yet the strong impulse of natural feeling hurried him away, in spite of his better resolutions.

"You need not go from us if you do not wish," he whispered, almost unconsciously, as he bent towards Isabel, in tones so low and choked, that it required an attentive ear to catch them. She evidently had done so, however; for, turning her tearful eyes upon him, she said, in a more cheerful voice—

"No, I will not go! I will never leave the dear home and the friends I love."

"Never," said Casembrot, recovering from the temporary emotion he had involuntarily betrayed, "is a word to be used cautiously, especially in early youth."

"Well, then, I will say to satisfy you, not now; not for—for—" she hesitated, and slightly coloured.

"Not for Count Louis of Nassau," said Casembrot, filling up the pause.

"I did not exactly mean that," replied Isabel, with a still deeper blush, and with an evident effort. "It is not him especially that I would reject—I do not wish ever to marry. I have been anxious for some time to tell you this, that you might impress it on my father's mind. You can do so much better than I, and thus spare me, for the future, I will not say discussions—for my father's kindness to me is angelic—but the pain of refusing anything that one so beloved may ask. Oh! shield me from the repetition of such useless grief. I know you have the power if you will but exert it."

Casembrot was much affected by the pleading look, the smile of trust with which this appeal was made; and it was with no steady voice that he replied—

"Flattered as I feel by your confidence, Lady Isabel, it is my duty to point out how much more pleased the count, your father, would be to hear your sentiments from your own lips; surely his tenderness deserves all trust."

"Perhaps you are right—I feel that you are so," said Isabel; "but I cannot tell you how, in spite of my warm, devoted, enthusiastic love for my father, my affection and respect for my dear mother, I feel timid even to nervousness in their presence. The very admiration which I feel for

them checks the flow of my confidence. My heart would tell, but my lips cannot. They would not chide, but they would not understand me. My wild, gay brothers would ridicule me were I to speak my thoughts; even my little sisters, as they grow, will be different, very different from me—even now they are buoyant and bold as I never was. No, until now I never found any one who would, or could, enter into my fancies and ways but you, Casembrot, and you too, I see, are fast changing."

Casembrot coloured painfully under the young girl's reproachful gaze, and replied with some embarrassment that his feelings neither would nor could ever change, however much circumstances might alter his mode of expressing them.

"But," urged Isabel, "I would have nothing altered between us. I would that all should remain as formerly—I, the attentive, docile pupil; and you, the patient guide. You know the title I once conferred upon you in play. Well, keep it to the end—be still my father-confessor, as you have been, especially to-day. Now your absolution, kind father, and I shall inflict upon you no more at present; but, like an obedient child, retire to my spinning-wheel."

A shade of displeasure, amounting to impatience, passed over the invalid's brow. There was something in the word *father* that grated on his ear, as a harsh trumpet of alarm might have sounded amidst a choir of angels. Father! This word, applied to him so frankly and confidently, crushed a wild, tumultuous train of hopes which Isabel's unconscious, almost caressing tenderness of voice and manner had, despite his better reason, awakened in his breast. That one word, so calmly spoken, dissipated the vague vision at once, crudely arousing him from his dream.

"Yes," said he, with a bitter smile most at variance with his usual and seemingly inborn gentleness, "I shall be too happy to be your confessor, counsellor, what you please, as long as I am your father's poor secretary. But I shall return to my estate one of these days—it wants my care—and you will marry a prince or a count at the very least, and go to a new home, and we shall, of course, forget everything we have said, or done, or even thought here!"

"God forbid!" said Isabel, warmly. "How strange, how captious you have become, Casembrot—ill-health must be the cause. But do not torment me by speaking of all the possible changes which, I know, time must bring, but which I endeavour to banish from my thoughts as much as possible. You seek in vain to frighten me," she continued, with a tearful smile. "My father will not let you go—nor my brothers—nor myself. As for me, as long as I can, I will remain under this roof; when I leave it, if I must eventually do so, then I shall exchange it for a convent. This determination is what makes me so unwilling to mix with, or to acquire any knowledge of, a world which I am resolved beforehand to renounce."

"These are idle fancies, lady, and will flee before reality one day, as the mists of morning are dissipated by the sun."

"Time will show."

"Time will show, indeed, that you must follow the current, like others."

"But I am not like others in anything; that you yourself have often allowed. Even in my childhood, I was unlike other children—more timid,

less playful; nor was I fond of learning, except from you. Books I never could endure; letters were always dead to me. But I loved the country and its lazy pleasures. To gaze on the green meadows and distant trees, or on the blue waters from our turret window, for hours together, in calm delight, or listen to the hum of distant voices—the evening song of the returning herdsman—these were my delight. I was a dreamy, indolent child, living in a little world of my own, thinking I scarce knew of what; I had thoughts that I could not frame into words. You know the gambols of other children always frightened and fatigued me. I could not run so fast as they; the least exertion seemed to tear my very heart from my bosom, and left me breathless—speechless for hours. My voice was too weak for them to heed it in their plays. Well, I now feel among grown people as I then did among children; scared by the loud gaiety of some, uninterested in the schemes, the plans, the wishes, that engross others, unable to understand the cares that agitate all around me. What seems to them so all-important, seems to me too trifling to be worth a moment's thought. I value highly what they scarce seem to notice or think of. I feel I am like a child among them. I am still true to my early tastes and feelings—loving the same things, the same beings. What should I, then, seek among those who do not understand me, and for whom I feel nothing? Every one seems striving to gain some great end, and never to enjoy quietly the happiness within reach. The world appears to me, what Madame de Parme describes it, full of strife and anger. The calm of my father's home, where all is love and smiles—or that of a convent, where all is peace—is alone fit for me. Say, Casembrot, am I not right in choosing a life of repose, since I have not the energy to embrace one of action?—You do not answer."

"Have you, then, no desire to be beloved by the world?" said Casembrot, with a downcast look; "to be admired—courted?"

"Oh, no! no!" exclaimed Isabel, shading her face with her hands. "The approach, the presence of strangers is always pain to me. To dream away my life as heretofore, none telling me of what passes in the troubled world without, is all I wish—it is all of earthly happiness that I would lay claim to."

"You would endeavour," said Casembrot, "to avoid entering upon the cares, the anxieties that make the heart weary, at times, in this chequered world: but then you must all renounce the gay hopes, the real joys, that, at others, make it a paradise to man."

"I think I am fitted to encounter neither."

"That is impossible!"

"I will try to keep my impassibility by withdrawing within myself," said Isabel, with one of her sweetest smiles.

"You cannot, lady! Your affections are too warm. Better, like me, try to steel yourself against sorrow, than hope to escape it—it will overtake you one day or another."

"It is time to leave you, my grave monitor. You are too wise, and too sad to-day—you afford me but scanty comfort. I will tell you when your forebodings come to pass. Adieu, knight of the mournful thoughts!" said she, with childish levity. "When I shall have lived as long as you, perhaps I shall have become as prophetic of evil; but I am at present too young to believe it impossible to avoid it."

These words, carelessly uttered, certainly never meant to wound, cut

deep into Casembrot's sensitive heart. A conviction presented itself to his mind which, however harrowing to his secret feelings, was too clear to be repulsed. All her thoughts had passed in review before his inquisitorial eye. No! he was not loved, as at one moment he had madly fancied. Whereas love makes the bold, the confident, the assuming, bashful in the presence of the beloved object, friendship alone, that calmest of feelings, could lend courage and confidence to one so shy and retiring as Isabel. Where was the downcast eye, the fear, the modesty of love? Hers was the openness, the simplicity, of a heart that, towards him at least, had no secret, no disguise. How could he, in his wildest flight of imagination, have dreamed that the daughter of the great, the noble Count of Egmont, head of a house no less illustrious by an antique and princely descent than by splendid alliances and immense wealth, could throw her eyes on a simple *gentilhomme*, whose race, though ancient too, had never stood sufficiently high to claim such a distinction, even had not his own want of wealth and position opposed an obvious obstacle.

And was it not enough that he should suffer in having permitted his own ardent affections to become fixed on an unattainable object, without desiring another, and that other a frail, a delicate, and a beloved being, to struggle with the same feelings, to endure the same pang of hopelessness? It was an ungenerous, unmanly desire; yet Casembrot could not help experiencing all the bitterness of disappointment, as he felt that every instant rivetted more closely the chain which he was destined to bear alone.

Isabel checked the strain of pleasantry in which she had last spoken; for, overcome by the conflict of opposing emotions, and the latent weakness of ill-health, Casembrot sank into a chair, and, hiding his face with his hands, wept like a child. She saw his distress without understanding its cause, and tried, though in vain, to soothe him by her kind solicitation. He repeated, in inarticulate accents, that ill-health alone caused this strange and unaccountable fit of despondency, and pleaded fatigue as an excuse for withdrawing from her presence.

When he entered his chamber, he gave way to his grief with a weakness against which all struggle was unavailing. He became then, for the first time, aware that the hopeless attachment, which he had yet fancied in its infancy, was an overgrown passion that would demand every energy of his soul to uproot. And had he that moral energy—that strength which alone raises man above all other created things, and elevates him even above woman's gentle resignation? Alas! he dared scarcely answer this question to his own bosom.

S I R E G L A M O U R.

A FRAGMENT.

HAS the reader ever observed, in studying Shakspeare, the power of that first of poets in investing his subordinate characters with a charm, an impressive influence, such as no other dramatist confers, at least in anything like the same degree? Other authors are commonly satisfied if they can interest us in two or three leading personages—to whose sayings and doings the sayings and doings of the lesser agents are mere mechanical adaptations. But Shakspeare gives to each an individuality which breathes a *noli me tangere*—an idiosyncrasy, a proper vitality of his own. The subordinate is not merely a supernumerary. The “walking gentleman” is not simply a stalking-horse. He is not modestly merged in the glory of the great man of the piece, but has a will of his own—instincts, habits, tastes, and a real personal history. He may be introduced in order to aid in the evolution of the central idea, to affect the development of the drama, and to elucidate the destiny of its hero; but Shakspeare rewards him for his services by drawing attention to his individual life; so that he is not merely relatively, but he is absolutely, an object of regard. While other writers make the subordinate a kind of sign-post—pointing the way—itself a naked piece of wood, hastily planed by the carpenter, and smeared over with white paint—Shakspeare lavishes art and ornament on *his* sign-post, makes it of polished marble instead of painted wood, carves it with the ease and finish of a master, and so perfects the appearance of the thing that we not only glance at it to read the direction, but pause to admire the cunning workmanship of the monument itself.

As an illustration, take *Sir Eglamour* in the “Two Gentlemen of Verona.” This chivalric personage utters, in the course of the five acts—how many lines? About five-and-twenty. Yet he becomes familiar to us, interests us in his behalf, and secures our respect and esteem, our confidence, our heart. The rôle he plays is but that of a Mr. Great-heart to poor pilgrimising *Sylvia*, in her flight from Milan and perjured *Proteus* to Mantua and exiled *Valentine*. *Sir Eglamour* is a gentleman, “valiant, wise, remorseful, well-accomplished.” He has had his sorrows, and they have chastened and refined him, and have made him the gentle and sympathising man in whose simple story we find such a charm. He has loved; but only to see the desire of his eyes taken away with a stroke. Poor *Thekla*, in Schiller’s “Wallenstein,” sings mournfully and very sweetly,— •

Du Heilige, rufe dein Kind zurück,
Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück,
Ich habe gelebt und geliebet.

And so has *Sir Eglamour* lived and loved—*gelebt und geliebet*.
Hear *Lady Sylvia* :—

Thyself hast lov’d; and I have heard thee say,
No grief did ever come so near thy heart,
As when thy lady and thy true love died,
Upon whose grave thou vow’lst pure chastity.

His life has corresponded to his vow; it has been spiritualised by the constant presence of an angelic form, to the music of whose mystic whisperings ("in memoriam") every chord of his heart has long since vibrated responsively, with the harmonies of undying love. He has that in his mien whereon noble hearts would implicitly rely. And therefore the noble Milanese maiden, intent on a perilous enterprise, relies on him, and commits her honour to his keeping—she another *Una*, and he another Red Cross Knight. *Hamlet* will take the *Ghost's* word for a thousand pounds; *Sylvia* has profounder confidence still in the trustworthiness of her knightly guide:—

Sir Eglamour, I would to *Valentine*,
To Mantua, where I hear he makes abode;
And, for the ways are dangerous to pass,
I do desire thy worthy company,
Upon whose faith and honour I repose.

She desires it from a heart as full of sorrows as the sea of sands. He pities much her grievances, and knowing they are traceable to virtue, and that it is no vulgar elopement which is proposed to him, and to which he is summoned as coadjutor, and that it is no giddy hoyden, but one of womanhood's finest ideals whom he is asked to succour, he gives consent to go along with her—

Recking as little what betideth me,
As much I wish all good beforntue you.
When will you go?

Syl.— This evening coming.

Egl.—Where shall I meet you?

Syl.— At friar Patrick's cell,

Where I intend holy confession.

Egl.—I will not fail, your ladyship:

Good morrow, gentle lady.

Syl.—Good morrow, kind Sir Eglamour.

Soon as the sun begins to gild the western sky, "kind *Sir Eglamour*" is at the abbey where the rendezvous is appointed.

And now it is about the very hour
That *Sylvia*, at Patrick's cell, should meet me.
She will not fail—for lovers break not hours,
Unless it be to come before their time;
So much they spur their expedition.

* * * See, where she comes—Lady, a happy evening!

What a grace and dignity—or, if you like Hendiadys better, what a gracious dignity—about the lady and her escort! How *Valentine* is indebted to that man, the preserver of his betrothed from a "most unhappy match," fleeing with her along the "rising of the mountain foot that leads to Mantua." At her bidding the chevalier leads the way, "out at the postern by the abbey wall," soothing her apprehension of spies by reminding her how near is the forest, which once reached, they will be safe, shaded in umbrageous concealment from the evil eye of malign pursuit. There they are seen, and the news is soon conveyed to Milan—

'Tis true; for friar Lawrence met them both,
As he in penance wandered through the forest:

there they are troubled by a thousand mischances, and sundered in that

“shadowy desert” and those “unfrequented woods” where robbers hide, making their will their law.

Shakspeare—master of the hearts of men!—why didst thou not tell us, by one line, as thou only couldst, the after-history of this Fidelio? Why not bring him once again upon the stage, if only to re-unite him honourably and happily to the heroes and heroines, instead of leaving him as thou *hast* left him—where? Alas! running from the outlaws, and, “being nimble-footed,” *out*-running them.

Really, it is a little vexatious to part with so excellent a gentleman as *Sir Eglamour* in such an attitude as *that*—allowing him, for all we know, to be at this instant perambulating Northern Italy with the intensity of the “Steam-Leg” and the endurance of the Wandering Jew. It serves to put us, as well as the knight-*courant*, out of breath. It is as if Shakspeare (we are going to swerve from orthodoxy a little) had painted an exquisite miniature—perfect as far as it goes, but—unfinished, some would even say, terminating in a daub. One is reminded of a mermaid, or something of that genus—in the upper premises “beautiful exceedingly”—but decidedly fishy and objectionable in the lower story. But this is heresy—and there, the least said is soonest mended.

S U M M E R, G O O D - B Y E.

BY J. ANTHONY, JUN.

Good-bye to thee, Summer!—I bid thee adieu,
For the leaves of the forest are faded and few,
And the breath of old Winter hath silvered the spray,
And night is fast creeping on beautiful day.

Good-bye to thee, Summer!—in woodland and dell
The flowerets have bid thee for ever farewell:
The smile of thy coming their race may restore,
But they, dearest Summer, will meet thee no more.

Good-bye to thee, Summer!—our parting doth seem
To me as the close of a beautiful dream,
Which Fancy hath wreathed in radiance so bright,
And broken her spell in the darkness of night.

Farewell, oh farewell, then, an thou wilt away,
I ask not why hurry, or bid thee to stay,
Nor vainly repine—chilly Winter must reign,
But hope, dearest Summer, to meet thee again.

Good-bye to thee, Summer!—I bid thee adieu,
For the leaves of the forest are faded and few,
And the breath of old Winter hath silvered the spray,
And night is fast creeping on beautiful day.

THE BLIND SISTER.

By DR. BORAX,

AUTHOR OF "A TALE OF MESMERISM," ETC.

FOR real comfort, snugness, and often rural beauty, where are there in the wide world any dwellings that can equal the cottage homes of England's middle classes? Whether they be clad with ivy and woodbine, half hidden by forest-trees, and approached by silent, shady lanes, or, glaring with stucco and green paint, stand perched upon flights of steps, by the side of dusty suburban roads,—whether they be cockney-christened with fine titles, and dignified as villas, halls, or lodges, or rejoice in such sweet names as Oak Cottage or Linden Grove,—still within their humble walls, before all other places, are to be found content, and peace, and pure domestic love.

Upon the slope of a gentle hill, about a mile from a large town, where I was attending to the practice of an absent friend, there stood a neat and pretty residence, with slated roof and trellised porch. A light verandah shaded the narrow French windows, opening from the favourite drawing-room upon a trim, smooth lawn, studded with gay *parterres*, and bounded by a sweet-briar hedge; and here old Mrs. Reed, the widow of a clergyman, was busily employed, one lovely autumn afternoon, peering through her spectacles at the fast-fading flowers, or plucking from some favourite shrub the "sear and yellow leaf" that spoke of the summer passed away, and the dreary season hurrying on apace. Her daughter, a pale and delicate-looking girl, sat with her drooping head leant against the open window-frame, watching her mother sorrowfully as she felt her own declining health, and thought how her parent's waning years might pass away, uncared for, and unsolaced by a daughter's love. Within the room, a young man was reclining lazily upon a sofa; rather handsome, about the middle height, *but* had it not been for a stubby moustache, very long hair, and his rather slovenly costume—peculiarities which he considered indispensable to his profession as an artist—there was nothing in his appearance to distinguish him from the generality of young English gentlemen of his age and station. Presently there fell upon his ear the notes of a beautiful symphony, played with most exquisite taste upon the harp, and gradually blending with a woman's voice, deep, soft, and tremulous, every now and then, as if with intense feeling, in one of those elaborate yet enervating melodies that have their birth in sunny Italy. The performer was about twenty-five years of age, of haughty and dazzling beauty. Her dark wavy hair, gathered behind into a large glossy knot, was decked on one side with a bunch of pink rose-buds. A full white robe, that covered, without hiding, the outline of her bust and arms, was bound at the waist with a thick cord and tassel of black silk and gold, adding all that dress could add to the elegance of her tall and splendid figure. Then, as she rose and stretched out her jewelled hand to tighten a loose string, the ineffable grace of the studied attitude in which she stood for some moments showed her to be well skilled in those fascinating arts that so often captivate the senses before the heart is touched.

This lady was the daughter of Mrs. Reed's only sister, who in her

youth had run away with an Italian music-master. Signor Arnatti, although a poor adventurer, was not quite devoid of honour, for, when first married, he really loved his English wife, and proudly introduced her to his friends at Florence, where her rank and fortune were made much of, and she was caressed and feted until half wild with pleasure and excitement. But this was not to last. Her husband, a man of violent and ungovernable temper, was heard to utter certain obnoxious political opinions; and it being discovered that he was connected with a dangerous conspiracy against the existing government, a speedy flight alone saved him from the scaffold or perpetual imprisonment. They sought a temporary home in Paris, where, after dissipating much of their little fortune at the gambling-table, he met with a sudden and violent death in a night-brawl, just in time to save his wife and child from poverty. The young widow, who of late had thought more of her infant than its father, was not long inconsolable. Discarded by her own relations, who, with bitter and cruel taunts, had refused all communication with her, and now too proud to return to them again, she settled with her little girl in Italy, where a small income enabled her to lead a life of unrestrained gaiety, that soon became almost necessary to her existence. Here young Catherine was reared and educated, flattered and spoiled, by all about her; and encouraged by her vain mother to expect nothing less than an alliance with high rank and wealth, she refused many advantageous offers of marriage, and ere long gained the character of a heartless and unprincipled coquette, especially among the English visitors, who constituted a great part of the society in which she moved. Her mother corresponded occasionally with Mrs. Reed; and the sisters still cherished an affection for each other, which increased as they advanced in years; but their ideas, their views, even their religion was different, and the letters they exchanged once, or at most twice a year, afforded but little satisfaction to either. When the cholera visited Italy, Madame Arnatti was seized with a presentiment that fate had already numbered her among its victims, and, under the influence of this feeling, wrote a long and touching letter to her sister, freely confessing the sin and folly of her conduct in regard to her daughter's management, of whom she gave a long description, softened, it is true, by a mother's hand, yet containing many painful truths, that must have caused the doting parent infinite sorrow to utter. She concluded by repeating her conviction that her end was near, and consigning Catherine to her sister's care, with an entreaty that she would take her from the immoral and polluted atmosphere in which they lived, and try the effect of her piety, and kindness, and steady English habits on the young woman's violent and ungovernable passions. Months passed away, and then Mrs. Reed received a letter from Catherine herself, telling of her mother's death; also one from a lady, in whose company she was travelling homeward, in accordance with her mother's dying wish. Another long interval elapsed, and the good lady was preparing to visit London, for the purpose of consulting an eminent physician on her daughter's state of health, when news reached the cottage of Miss Arnatti's arrival in that city, which had been retarded thus long by tedious quarantine laws, illness, and other causes.

Her guardian was apparently glad enough to get rid of the charge she had undertaken, and within a week Catherine removed to her aunt's

lodgings, where she was received with attention; but a constant yearning after society and unfeeling as it appeared to her relatives, so fond of an only parent; the freedom and boldness of her manners in company or in public, and her overbearing conduct to those about her, augured but little in favour of such an addition to their circle. However, the good aunt hoped for better things from the removal to her quiet country-home. Their stay in London was even shorter than they had intended, and, for some time after their return to the cottage, Miss Arnatt endeavoured to adapt herself to the habits that must have been so strange and new to her, she even sought, and made herself agreeable in, the very orderly but cheerful society where her aunt and cousin introduced her, although Annie Reed's increasing weakness prevented them from receiving much company at their own house.

Edwin Reed, Catherine's other cousin, was absent on a tour in Wales, and had only returned a few days previous to the afternoon on which we have described him as listening, enraptured, to the lady's native music. Seating herself at the piano, she followed this by a brilliant waltz, the merry, sparkling notes of which made the eye brighten and the brain whirl, from very sympathy; and then returning to her favourite instrument, she sang, to a low, plaintive accompaniment, a simple English ballad, telling of man's heartlessness, and woman's frailty and despair. The last verse ran:—

So faith and hope her soul forsaking,
Each day to heavier sorrow waking,
This cruel love her heart was breaking;

Yet, ere her breath
Was hushed in death,
She breathed a prayer
For her betrayer—

Angels to heaven her poor soul taking.

Scarcely had she finished, when, as if in thorough contempt of the maiden's weakness, she drew her hand violently across the strings with a discordant crash, that startled poor little Annie painfully, and pushing the harp from her with an impatient gesture, abruptly quitted the room.

The old lady had gone in to enjoy a gossip with her next-door neighbour, and so the brother and sister were alone. The signs of tears were on the latter's cheek as Edwin approached and sat down by her side; attributing this to her extreme sensibility wrought upon by what they had just heard, he spoke some kind and cheering words, and then began to talk enthusiastically of their cousin's beauty and accomplishments. She listened to him quietly for some time, and then,

“ Dear brother,” she said, timidly, “ you must forgive me for what I am about to say, when it is to warn and caution you against those very charms that have already made such an impression on you. I am not one, Edwin, as you know, to speak ill, even of my enemies, if such there be; and to any other but yourself would hide her faults, and try to think of some pleasing trait on which to dwell, when her name was mentioned. Nay, do not interrupt me, for, rest assured, I am only prompted by a sister's love. I have seen much of Catherine, and heard more; I fear her dreadful temper—her different faith; although, indeed, she seems to neglect all religious duties, even those of her own church. Then I think of her rudeness and inattention to our dear mother, who is so kind and

“... when we first met, you would be grieved and pained at all we witnessed there.”

“... dear,” said her brother, “why should you talk thus seriously to me? Surely I may admire and praise a handsome woman, without falling hopelessly in love.”

“You may, or you may not,” continued Annie, warmly. “But this I know and feel, that, unless she were to change in every manner, thought, and action, she is the last person in the world that I would see possess a hold upon my brother’s heart. Why, do you know, she makes a boast of the many lovers she has encouraged and discarded; and even shows, with ill-timed jests, letters from her admirers, containing protestations of affection, and sentiments that any woman of common feeling would at least consider sacred.”

“And have you nothing, then, to say in her favour?” said young Reed, quietly. “Can you make no allowance for the manner in which she has been brought up? or, may she never change from what you represent her?”

“She may, perhaps; but let me beg of you, Edwin, to pause, and think, and not be infatuated and led away, against your better judgment, as so many have already been.”

“Why, my dear sister,” he replied, “if we were on the point of running off together, you could not be more earnest in the matter; but I have really never entertained such thoughts as you suggest, and if I did, should consider myself quite at liberty to act as I pleased, whether I were guided by your counsel or not.”

“Well, Edwin, be not angry with me; perhaps I have spoken too strongly on the subject. You know how much I have your happiness at heart, and this it is that makes me say so much. I often think I have not long to live, but while I am here would have you promise me —”

A chilly breeze swept over the lawn, and the invalid was seized with a violent fit of coughing; her brother shut the casement, and wrapped the shawl closer round her slight figure. Mrs. Reed entered the room at the same instant, and their conversation ended.

Catherine Arnatti was in her own chamber, the open window of which was within a few yards of where her cousins had been talking. Attracted thither by the sound, she listened intently, and leaning out, apparently employed in training the branches of a creeping plant, she had heard every word they uttered.

The winter passed away pleasantly enough, for two at least of the party at the cottage.

Catherine and Edwin were of necessity thrown much together; she sat to him as a model, accompanied him in his walks, and flattered him by innumerable little attentions, that were unnoticed by the others; but still her conduct to his mother and sister, although seemingly more kind of late, was insincere, and marked by a want of sympathy and affection, that often grieved him deeply. Her temper she managed to control, but sometimes not without efforts on her part that were more painful to witness than her previous outbreaks of passion. Six months had elapsed since Miss Arnatti had overheard, with feelings of hatred towards one, and thorough contempt of both speakers, the dialogue in which her faults had been so freely exposed. Yet she fully expected that young Reed would soon be at her feet, a humble follower, as other men had been; but although polite, attentive, and ever seeking her society, he still forbore to

speak of love, and then, piqued and angry at his conduct, she used every means to gain his affection, without at first any real motive for so doing; soon, however, this wayward lady began to fancy that the passion she would only feign was really felt—and being so unexpectedly thwarted gave strength to this idea—and in proportion also grew her hatred towards Miss Reed, to whose influence she attributed her own failure. Before long she resolved that Edwin *should* be her husband, by which means her revenge on Annie would be gratified, and a tolerable position in the world obtained for herself, for she had ascertained that the young man's fortune, although at present moderate, was yet sufficient to commence with, and that his prospects and expectations were nearly all that could be desired.

Neither was Edwin altogether proof against her matchless beauty. At times he felt an almost irresistible impulse to kneel before her, and avow himself a slave for ever, and as often would some hasty word or un congenial sentiment turn his thoughts into another channel; and then they carried him away to an old country seat in Wales, where he had spent the summer of last year on a visit to some friends of his family. A young lady, of good birth and education, resided there as governess to some half-dozen wild and turbulent children. Her kind and unobtrusive manners and gentle voice first attracted his attention towards her; and although perhaps not handsome, her pale sweet face and dark blue eye made an impression that deepened each day as he discovered fresh beauties in her intellectual and superior mind. After an acquaintance of some months he made an offer of his hand, and her conduct on this occasion only confirmed the ardent affection he entertained for her. Candidly admitting that she could joyfully unite her lot with his, she told her previous history, and begged the young man to test his feelings well before allying himself to a poor and portionless girl, and for this purpose prayed that twelve months might elapse before the subject of their marriage were renewed. She would not doubt him then; still he might see others, who would seem more worthy of his regard; but if, in that time, his sentiments were unchanged, all that she had to give was his *for ever*. In vain he tried to alter this resolution; her arguments were stronger than his own, and so at last, with renewed vows of fidelity, he reluctantly bade her farewell. For various reasons he had kept this attachment a secret from his family, not altogether sure of the light in which they might view it; and the position of the young governess would have been rendered doubly painful, had those under whose roof she dwelt been made acquainted with the circumstances. Although fully aware in cooler moments that, even had he known no other, his cousin Catherine was a person with whom, as a companion for life, he could never hope for real happiness, still he knew the danger of his situation, and resolved, not without a struggle, to tear himself away from the sphere of her attractions; and so, one evening, Edwin announced his intention of setting off next day on a walking excursion through Scotland, proposing to visit Wales on his return. Different were the feelings with which each of the ladies received this intelligence. Catherine, who had but the day before refused a pressing invitation to join a gay party, assembled at the London mansion of one of her old acquaintances, turned away and bit her lip with rage and chagrin, as Miss Reed repeated to her mother, who had grown deaf of late, over and over again to make her understand, that Edwin was about to leave them for a

time—was going to Scotland, and purposed leaving by the mail on the morrow night. She had of course no objection to offer, being but too glad to believe that nothing more than friendship existed between her son and sister's child; yet wondered much what had led to such a sudden resolution.

Catherine Arnatt never closed her eyes that night; one instant fancying that Edwin loved her, and only paused to own it for fear of a refusal, and flattering herself that he would not leave without. These thoughts gave way to bitter disappointment, hatred, and vows of revenge against him, and all connected with him, more particularly his sister, whose words she now recalled, torturing herself with the idea that Annie had extorted a promise from her brother never to wed his cousin while she lived; and the sickly girl had improved much since then, and might, after all, be restored to perfect health; then, the first time for years, she wept—cried bitterly at the thought of being separated from one against whom she had but just before been breathing threats and imprecations, and yet imagined was the only man she had ever really loved. A calmer mood succeeded, and she lay down, resolving and discarding schemes to gain her wishes, that occupied her mind till daylight.

The next day passed in busy preparations; Edwin avoiding, as he dreaded, the result of a private interview with his cousin. Towards the afternoon Miss Reed and her mother happened to be engaged with their medical attendant, who opportunely called that day, and often paid longer visits than were absolutely necessary; and Catherine, who with difficulty had restrained her emotions, seizing on the opportunity, and scarcely waiting to knock at the door, entered Edwin's apartment. He was engaged in packing a small portmanteau, and looking up, beheld her standing there, pale and agitated, more beautiful he thought than ever, and yet a combination of the angel and the fiend. Some moments passed in silence; then, advancing quickly, holding out her hand, she spoke in a husky voice:

"Edwin, I have come to bid you a farewell—if, indeed, you go to-night, in this world we shall never meet again; neither hereafter, if half that you believe is true. It sets one thinking, does it not? a parting that we feel to be for ever, from those with whom we have been in daily intercourse, even for a few short months."

"And pray, Catherine," he asked, trying to talk calmly, "why should we not meet again? Even if I were about to visit the antipodes I should look forward to return some day; indeed, it would grieve me much to think that I should never enjoy again your company, where I have spent so many pleasant hours, and of which, believe me, I shall ever cherish a grateful recollection. Be kind to poor Annie and my mother when I am gone, and if you think it not too great a task, I shall be very glad sometimes to hear the news from you, and in return will write you of my wanderings in the Highlands."

"Well, good-bye, Edwin," she repeated; "for all you say, my words may yet prove true."

But I do not go yet for some hours, and we shall meet again below before I leave; why not defer good-bye till then?"

There was another pause before she answered, with passionate energy, and grasping his arm tightly:

"And is this all you have to say? Now listen to me, Edwin; know

that I love you, and judge of its intensity by my thus owning it. I am no bashful English girl, to die a victim to concealment or suspense, but *must* and *will* know all at once. Now, tell me, sir, have I misplaced my love? Tell me, I say, and quickly, for, by the powers above, you little know how much depends upon your answer."

She felt his hand, cold and trembling; his face was even paler than her own, as, overwhelmed with confusion, Edwin stammered out—

"Really, Miss Arnatt—I Catherine—I was not aware; at least, I am so taken by surprise. Give me time to think, for—"

"What, then, you hesitate," she said, stamping her foot; and then, with desperate calmness, added, in a softer tone, "Well, be it so; body and soul I offer, and you reject the gift." A violent struggle was racking the young man's breast, and, by the working of his countenance, she saw it, and paused. But still he never raised his eyes to hers, that were so fixed on him; and she continued: "You ask for time to think; oh! heaven and hell, that I should come to this! But take it, and think well; it is four hours before you quit this roof; I will be there to say adieu. Or better, perhaps, if you will write, and give at leisure the result of your deliberations."

She spoke the last words with a bitter sneer; yet Edwin caught at the suggestion, and replied:

"Yes, I will write, I promise you, within a month. Forgive my apparent coldness; forgive—"

"Hush!" interrupted Catherine; "your sister calls; why does she come here now? You will not mention what has passed, I know; remember, within a month I am to hear. Think of me kindly, and believe that I might make you love me even as I love you. Now, go to her, go before she finds you here."

Edwin pressed her hand in parting, and she bent down her forehead, but the kiss imprinted there was cold and passionless. He met his sister at the door, and led her back affectionately to the drawing-room she had just quitted.

The old gardener had deposited a portmanteau and knapsack on the very edge of the footpath by the side of the high road, and had been watching for the mail, with a great horn lantern, some half-hour or so before it was expected; while the housemaid was stationed inside the gate, upon the gravel-walk, ready to convey the intelligence, as soon as the lights were visible coming up the hill; and cook stood at the front-door, gnawing her white apron. The family were assembled in that very unpleasant state of expectation, that generally precedes the departure of a friend or relative; Edwin walking about the room, wrapped up for travelling, impatient and anxious to be off. At last, the gardener hallooed out lustily; Betty ran towards the house, as if pursued by a wild beast, and screaming, "It's a coming;" and cook, who had been standing still all the time, rushed in, quite out of breath, begging Mr. Edwin to make haste, for the coach never waited a minute for nobody; so he embraced his mother and sister; and then, taking Catherine's hand, raised it hastily, but respectfully to his lips. Miss Reed watched the movement, and saw how he avoided the piercing gaze her cousin fixed upon him, not so intently though, but that she noted the faint gleam of satisfaction that passed over Annie's pale face; and cursed her for it. Strange, that the idea of any other rival had never haunted her.

"Good-bye, once more," said Edwin. "I may return before you expect me; God bless you all!"

And, in another five minutes, he was seated by the side of the frosty old gentleman who drove the mail, puffing away vigorously at his meerschaum.

The ladies passed a dismal evening; more so, indeed, than the circumstances would seem to warrant. Annie commenced a large piece of embroidery, that, judging from its size and the slow progress made, seemed likely to afford her occupation and amusement until she became an old woman; while Mrs. Reed called to mind all the burglaries and murders that had been committed in the neighbourhood during the last twenty years; deplored their unprotected situation, discussing the propriety of having an alarm-bell hung between two of the chimney-pots, and making arrangements for the gawlerer to sleep on the premises for the future. Miss Arnatt never raised her head from the book over which she bent supper, generally their most cheerful meal, remained untouched, and, earlier than usual, they retired to their respective chambers.

For several hours, Catherine sat at her open window, looking out into the close, hazy night. The soft wind, that every now and then had rustled through the trees, or shaken dewdrops from the thick ivy clustered beneath the overhanging eaves, had died away. As the mist settled down, and a few stars peeped out just over head, a black curtain of clouds seemed to rise up from the horizon, hiding the nearest objects in impenetrable darkness. The only sounds now heard were those that told of man's vicinity, and his restlessness: the occasional rumble of a distant vehicle; the chime of bells; sometimes the echo of a human voice, in the direction of the town; the ticking of a watch, or the hard breathing of those that slept; and these fell on the ear, with strange distinctness, amid the awful stillness of nature. Presently, the clouds, that hung over a valley far away, opened horizontally for an instant, while a faint flash of lightning flickered behind, showing their cumbersome outline. In a few minutes a brighter flash in another quarter was followed by the low roll of distant thunder; and so the storm worked round, nearer and nearer, until it burst in all its fury over the hill on which the cottage stood.

Miss Reed, who from her childhood had always felt an agonising and unconquerable fear during a thunder-storm, roused from her light slumber, lay huddled up, and trembling, with her face buried in the pillow. She did not hear the door open or the footstep that approached so stealthily, before a hand was laid upon her shoulder; and starting up she recognised her cousin.

"Oh, Catherine!" she faltered, covering her eyes, "do stay with me awhile; I am so terrified—and think of Edwin, too, exposed as he must be to it."

"I have been thinking of him, Annie."

"But you are frightened, also, a little, are you not—with all your courage, or what made you shake so then?" said the poor girl, trying to draw her cousin nearer as flash after flash glared before her closed eyelids, and louder claps of thunder followed each at shorter intervals.

"I frightened?" replied the dauntless woman. "I frightened; and what at? Not at the thunder surely; and as for lightning, if it strikes, they say it brings a sudden and a painless death, leaving but seldom even a mark upon the corpse. Who would not prefer this, to lingering on a bed of sickness."

"Do not say so, Catherine, pray do not; only think if——O God, have mercy on us! Was not *that* awful?"

"Was it not grand? Magnificent—awful, if you will. Think of its raging and revelling uncontrolled, and striking where and what it will, without a bound or limit to its fury. And fancy such a storm pent up in the narrow compass of a human breast, and yet not bursting its frail prison. What can the torments, that they tell us of, hereafter, be to this?"

"And what reason can you have, dear cousin, for talking thus? Kneel down by me, for once, and pray; for surely, at such a time as this, if at no other, you must feel there is a God."

"No; you pray, Annie Reed, if it will comfort you; pray for us both. There, now, lie down again, and hide your face. I will stand by your side and listen to you."

She drew the slender figure gently back. Then, with a sudden movement, seizing a large pillow, dashed it over Annie's face, pressing thereon with all her strength. The long, half-smothered, piteous cry that followed, was almost unheard in the roaring of the storm that now was at its height. By the vivid light that every instant played around, she saw the violent efforts of her victim, whose limbs were moving up and down, convulsively, under the white bed-clothes. Then, throwing the whole weight of her body across the bed, she clutched and strained upon the frame, to press more heavily. Suddenly all movement ceased, and the murderer felt a short and thrilling shudder underneath her. Still, her hold never relaxed; untouched by pity or remorse, exulting in the thought that the cruel deed was nearly done, so easily, and under circumstances where no suspicion of the truth was likely to arise; dreading to look upon the dead girl's face too soon, lest the mild eyes should still be open, and beaming on her with reproach and horror.—But what was it she felt then, so warm and sticky, trickling down her arm? She knew it to be blood, even before the next flash showed the crimson stain, spreading slowly over the pillow. Again the electric fluid darted from the clouds, but this time charged with its special mission from on high. The murderer was struck! and springing up, she fell back with one shrill, wild, piercing shriek, that reached the ears of those below, before it was drowned in the din of falling masonry, and the tremendous crash that shook the house to its foundation, until the walls quivered, like the timbers of a ship beating on a rocky shore.

That night I had been to visit a patient at some distance, and finding no shelter near when returning, had ridden on through the storm. Just entering the town, I overtook a man, pressing on quickly in the same direction. Making some passing remark upon the weather, I was recognised by the old gardener, who begged me for God's sake to hurry back; the cottage, he said, was struck by lightning, and two of the ladies either dying or dead, from the injuries they had received. In a few minutes my horse was at the gate. I had just time to observe that two of the chimneys were thrown down, and some mischief done to the roof. On entering the house, I was guided, by the low wailing sound of intense grief, to an upper room, where I beheld one of those scenes that, in an instant, stamp themselves upon the memory, leaving their transfer there for ever.

Day was just breaking; a cold grey light slowly gaining strength over the yellow glare of some unsnuffed candles, while the occasional

boom of distant thunder told that the storm was not yet exhausted. Extended on a low couch, and held by the terrified servants, was the wreck of the once beautiful Catherine Arnatti; at short intervals her features became horribly distorted by an epileptic spasm, that seized one side of the body, while the other half appeared to be completely paralysed; and the unmeaning glare of the eye, when the lid was raised, told that the organ of vision was seriously injured, if not entirely destroyed. Close by, the mother bent sobbing over the helpless form of her own child, blanched and inanimate, with a streak of blood just oozing from her pallid lips. I found afterwards, that Miss Reed, in her fearful struggle, had ruptured a vessel, and, fainting from the loss of blood, had lain for some time to all appearance dead. Shortly, however, a slight fluttering over the region of the heart, and a quiver of the nostril, told that the principle of life still lingered in the shattered tenement. With the aid of gentle stimulants, she recovered sufficiently to recognise her mother; but as her gaze wandered vacantly around, it fell on the wretched and blasted creature, from whose grasp she had been so wonderfully rescued. As if some magnetic power was in that glance, Catherine rose up suddenly, despair and horror in the glassy stare she fixed on the corpse-like form before her, as, with another yell, such as burst forth when first struck by the hand of God, she relapsed into one of the most dreadful and violent paroxysms I had ever witnessed. Annie clung tightly to her mother, crying, in a faint, imploring voice, "Oh, save me—save me from her!" ere, with a heavy sigh, she once more sank into insensibility. It was not until late in the afternoon, and then only with great difficulty, that she was able to make those around her understand what had taken place, and account for the intense horror that seized upon her, when at times a groan or cry was heard from the adjoining chamber, in which Miss Arnatti lay. It became, therefore, necessary that this person should be removed, and accordingly the same night she was taken to lodgings in the town. Her conduct there was such as to induce a belief that she might be insane, and steps were taken towards placing her in a private asylum. Once only, a few days after her removal, she asked, suddenly, if Miss Reed were not dead; but appeared to betray no emotion on being informed, that although still alive, her cousin was in most imminent danger, and, turning away, from that time maintained a determined silence, which nothing could induce her to break, obstinately refusing all medical aid.

I visited her, in company with the physician in attendance, about six weeks afterwards, when she appeared to have recovered, in a great measure, the use of her limbs; but every lineament of the face was altered; the sight of one eye quite destroyed, and drawn outward, until little could be seen but a discoloured ball, over which the lid hung down, flabby and powerless; while a permanent distortion of the mouth added to the frightful appearance this occasioned. The beautiful hair was gone, and the unsightly bristles that remained were only partly concealed by the close-fitting cap she wore. It was indeed a sight to move the sternest heart. That proud and stately woman, who had so cruelly abused the power her personal beauty alone had given her; trifling alike with youth's ardent and pure first love, as with the deeper and more lasting affection of manhood, and glorying in the misery and wretchedness she caused! Stopped in her full career, her punishment

began already. Yet was there no index on that stolid face to tell how the dark spirit worked within; whether it felt remorse or sorrow for the crime, and pity for its victim, fearing a further punishment in this world or the next; whether the heart was torn by baffled rage and hatred still, scheming and plotting, even now that all hope was gone. Or was the strong intellect really clouded?

That night her attendant slept long and heavily; she might have been drugged, for Miss Arnatti had access to her desk and jewel-case, in the secret drawers of which were afterwards found several deadly and carefully-prepared poisons.

In a room below was a large chimney-glass, and here Catherine first saw the full extent of the awful judgment that had befallen her. A cry of rage and despair, and the loud crash of broken glass, aroused the inmates early in the morning: they found the mirror shivered into a thousand fragments, but their charge was gone. We learnt that day, that a person answering to her description, wearing a thick veil, and walking with pain and difficulty, had been one of the passengers on board a steam-packet that left the town at daylight.

For a long time Annie Reed lay in the shadow of death. She lived, however, many years, a suffering and patient invalid. Edwin married his betrothed and brought her home, where his fond mother and sister soon loved her as they loved him; and Annie played aunt to the first-born, and shared their happiness awhile; and when her gentle spirit passed away, her mother bent to the heavy blow, living resigned and peacefully with her remaining children to a good old age.

All efforts to trace the unhappy fugitive proved unavailing, and much anxiety was felt on her account; but about ten months after her disappearance, Mrs. Reed received a letter relative to the transfer of what little property her niece had possessed to a convent in Tuscany. The lady-abhess, a distant relative of Miss Arnatti's, had also written much concerning her, from which the following is extracted:—

“When a child, Catherine was for two years a boarder in this very house. Fifteen years passed since then, and she came to us travel-worn, and weak, and ill. Her history is known only to her confessor and myself; and she has drawn from us a promise that the name of England should never more be mentioned to her; and whatever tidings we may hear, in consequence of this communication, from those she had so cruelly injured, whether of life and health, or death—of forgiveness, or hatred and disgust at her ingratitude—that no allusion to it should be ever made to her. She follows rigidly the most severe rules of the establishment, but avoids all intercourse with the sisters. Much of her time is spent at the organ, and often, in the dead of night, we are startled or soothed by the low melancholy strains that come from the dark chapel. Her horror always on the approach of thunder-storms is a thing fearful to witness, and we think she cannot long survive the dreadful shocks she suffers from this cause. They leave her, too, in total darkness many days. A mystery to all, we only speak of her as the BLIND SISTER.”

AID TO TALENT.

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

IT has been with amazement that we have read the history of many a great man. It has seemed as though some evil genius had, at the outset of his career, strewed every kind of obstacle and difficulty in his path; and looking at the opposition which had to be surmounted, we have been astonished at the success which was finally achieved. So extraordinary have appeared to us the desperate energy and resolution with which such a man thrust from his course everything adverse to the attainment of his object, that perhaps it has been oftentimes his determination rather than his talent that has most forcibly struck us on the perusal of his memoirs. And there are suggested by this fact two very interesting and important considerations, upon which we propose to dwell in the present brief essay.

The first is,—that the talent, thus checked and hindered in its exhibition, has, when subsequently emancipated, shone with diminished glory and for a lessened period; and the second,—that if, in many cases, talent has only been so emancipated by the exertion of the greatest courage, resolution, and endurance, often and often, where these qualities have been wanting, must it have failed entirely to display itself, and thus been wasted and lost.

Now we need not argue the fact, that every mental like every bodily faculty improves by exercise and cultivation. The orator gives a higher character to his oratory by diligent study and persevering practice; the author, writing frequently and attentively, will find through this circumstance his writings possess a higher finish, and approach nearer to perfection; the abstruse thinker will perceive from his persistence in habits of thought that his mental faculties will be more at his command, will more readily grasp and successfully grapple with the subjects dictated by his will. Even so the painter will achieve a wonderful advance in his art by study, and the mechanician accomplish by perpetual toil a vast and manifest improvement. The orator, the author, the abstruse thinker, the painter and the mechanician, may each one be possessed of extraordinary talent, yet it cannot be denied that great as may be their ability, the future magnitude of it must, to a momentous extent, depend upon themselves. No amount of talent can supersede the necessity for diligent application; and if that application be withheld, the brightness of the mental gift will be sadly diminished. And if this be so, and if circumstances are at the commencement of their course so sadly adverse to many who have within them high intellectual ability, struggling in vain to gain access to a field wherein it might display itself, it is evident that the delay, the want of exercise, the absence of everything like encouragement and assistance, the presence of every obstacle and hindrance,—it is evident we say, that these circumstances will have their effect in dimming the intellectual lustre, and diminishing the mental strength. Say that I have within me the germs of a great orator,—that my mind is of that peculiar fashion that the expression of my ideas renders me none of that trouble which the task generally more or less

involves,—and that the mode of such expression exhibits a correctness and a force by which I may be immediately identified; assume this, and then contemplate the fact of my occupation being one affording scarcely the slightest opportunity of my testing or exercising my peculiar ability,—so that I might most naturally try to get rid of any notion of such ability, and to keep in mind only the uncongenial pursuit whereby I gained my bread. We say, so put the case before you, and indeed you can hardly fail to see that even if, as far as I can, I nourish the talent bestowed upon me, give it as much attention as lies in my power, and so energetically labour that, after a long and dreary period, after having sickened and despaired, revived and sickened again, and again revived, I drag myself into notice and subsequently into fame, it is little likely that bright luminary as I may then be discovered to be, and dazzling as may be my radiance, that I shall appear before the world as vividly and as strikingly as I *should* have appeared had my powers been fed by salutary practice and expanded by kind assistance, instead of having been warped by compulsory inaction, and chilled by difficulty and neglect? Nay, it can scarcely be but that I shall have suffered through the delay of my triumph; I am not the man I should have been under happier and brighter circumstances.

But let us go a step further. I have fought and I have won; I have toiled and I have triumphed. Just as I am about descending the hill of life I find that I have arrived at the goal of my ambition. Henceforth I am famous—henceforth my name will be in every man's mouth, and I shall be hailed as an important benefactor of my species. People marvel when they hear of the up-hill journey I have had to undergo, and are astonished at the perseverance with which I have combated and overcome the difficulties and dangers of the way. I have no cause to complain now of indifference or neglect. On the contrary, I am loaded with advantages and oppressed with benefits. There is a feeling that I ought to have been known before, and an emotion of regret that so many years I dwelt in obscurity, while the most prolonged life that I may enjoy will too speedily close for the welfare of my kind. *The most prolonged life!* it is scarcely likely that my days will be many; the same cause that kept me so long from the bulk of my fellow-men, will, in all probability, have worked to the hastening my removal from them. I pined in obscurity; I sorrowed when cruel restrictions were imposed upon my inclinations—when the mind had to devote itself to unworthy occupations, and the hand to insignificant pursuits. The struggle, long continued, was not without its effect, the fatigue, the anxiety, the hope deferred, the expectations unrealised, the aspirations thwarted, all tended to a consequence. True, I won the victory—true, undaunted and undismayed, I strained every nerve, exerted every energy, and fighting manfully, won gloriously; but the labour necessitated to obtain the triumph has made it sure that that triumph shall not be of long duration, and that the eye, at last lighted up with success, and the heart, at length caused to bound with the delight of victory, shall ere long, both the one and the other, cease to perform their office, and know the darkness and the quiet of death and the grave.

But now, if these evil results are consequent upon difficulty and delay in the exhibition of talent, in those cases where, after fierce struggling, the man more than ordinarily gifted has at length thrust himself into notice, it will be no arduous task to prove to the reader that there are in-

stances where even a greater evil accrues, where obstacles are succumbed to instead of being destroyed, and where, therefore, the mental superiority never shines forth, and never brings good to its possessor or the world.

And, if regard have been paid to our opening remarks, the causes at work in such instances will be immediately apparent. We have implied that it can only be by "the exertion of the greatest courage, resolution, and endurance," that the unfavourably-circumstanced talented man in any department can hope to free himself from the trammels by which he may be beset, and display himself before the world in his true and real light. "The greatest courage, resolution, and endurance!"—what a combination of rare qualities is needed! Nerve to make every effort—will to make every effort—bodily health and strength sufficient for the making every effort. Why, if all these have been required to achieve its display, when circumstances have been adverse thereto, what a vast amount of talent must have been withheld from the world! And yet, inasmuch as we have given the finally-successful man credit for the possession of these qualities, we have only to withdraw them from his character to see at once that by so doing we render it impossible for his career to have ended otherwise than in defeat. But more than this, we need not abstract the three requirements, but any one, and the result will be the same. Take away his courage, take away the undaunted front which he opposed to every opposition, and the determined hand with which he wrenched away every obstacle, and you may give him credit for desire for fame, and health and strength to support him in the pursuit of it; but his timidity will form an insuperable bar to his success, *he will resign the effort in despair*. Take away his resolution, take away the hardy will, the irresistible impulse, the fervent longing for a great name, and you may ascribe to the man courage which might have sustained him against all opponents and nerved him against all assaults, and may imagine him blessed with health of body that would have stood unshaken under heaviest labours; but you cannot fail to see, that, without the stimulus which you have taken from him, *he will resign the effort in despair*. Take away his power of bodily endurance, substitute for the strong frame the sickly and the rude health, the delicate, and, indeed, the gifted man may burn with unquenchable desire, an appetite for greatness, for honour, for undying and transcendent and surpassing renown that cannot be, and will not be, suppressed, and with the will to toil nobly, he may have the courage and the nerve for labour—*he will NOT indeed resign the effort in despair*, he will not sit down and idly weep over thwarted endeavours and blasted hopes, he will put forth every energy, he will strain and toil with every power with which he has been gifted; but you must assuredly see that the chances infinitely are, that before even the goal shall have appeared in sight the runner will fall down and die. So that, assume the absence of any one of the three qualities we have named, and you leave little hope of success to the poor but gifted man struggling after greatness. There may be everything within him constituting a great man; placed in a prominent position he might be a glory to a nation, but as he is, weighed down by adverse circumstances, met in every direction by obstacle and opposition, the talent that is within him is, and will be, hid from the view, and no good be wrought by it, and no benefit conferred.

Now we are quite prepared to hear it said "you are only dwelling upon an evil known and acknowledged; the difficulty is to discover a

remedy ; could such remedy be ascertained, it would be eagerly availed of." We grant this, and we say at once that it is not our intention at the present time to detail the means by which we believe the cause of talent might be importantly benefited. Our object now is simply to call earnest attention to the fact, that it would be indeed a great blessing if some mode could be devised whereby, of a certainty, superior ability could bring itself before the world, and freely work for the welfare of mankind. We want every thinking individual to consider this ; we want the great and gifted in our land to consider this ; we want the successful talented man to consider this. This is not a time when we can afford to lose mental ability of a high character. We are not so rich in talent at the present day ; circumstances now are not so very easy, the way so very smooth, or the prospect so very bright, that it can be a matter of indifference that lofty talents in some cases should never see the light, and never shine out over a clouded creation. If we cast our eyes around at this hour, if we contemplate the mightiness of the aspect of the times, if we consider the evidence afforded by all things upon which our eye rests, that indeed, and in truth, there is much to make a wise and a kind man deeply ponder, and ask "whither are events tending ? and what sights shall another generation witness?"—we say, if this be so, the need is indeed evident for the calling to labour every large and lofty capacity. Never let it be said "we have plenty of clever men, we need not go searching in the highways and by-ways for unknown ability." Neither let it be said "we cannot devise any scheme which would have the marvellous power of first discovering and then fostering the store of talent in a land fated to remain unrevealed." Let not either of these observations be uttered ; rather let us hear the words—"the evil is clear, the remedy is difficult to be devised, but at least the effort shall be made ; we will endeavour to give facility to the highly-gifted among us, to show in its full force the blessing conferred upon them, and thus enable them to achieve in glorious unison their own happiness and the world's advantage."

TASSO.

BY W. BRAILSFORD, ESQ.

THE world and all for love, the same fond theme
 That woke the utterance of Petrarch's sighs
 To music ever sweet; the gentle gleam
 That lights the summer of man's memories
 For ever and for aye,—such Tasso's dream.
 Oh! who shall lift the veil that we may seem
 Spectators of a true heart's miseries,
 Or note a poet's wayward fantasies?
 Are we not gainers on our part to learn
 The secret strength of love's ~~aid~~ gift of song?
 Or if we feel life's scars, we yet discern
 Its compensations, gleaned good from wrong,
 And challenging the adverse powers of fate
 To fill our minds with thoughts disconsolate.

JACOB VAN DER NEESS.

A ROMANCE.

BY MADAME PAALZOW.

CHAPTER XXII.

OWING to the succession of festivities which took place in Amsterdam on the occasion of this visit, it was not till the evening of the second day that Lord Fawcett found time to repair to his stepmother's house, since his rank obliged him to accompany the king.

While the whole population of the city seemed attracted towards the quarter where such a display of magnificence took place, the more distant parts were left silent and deserted, and presented a striking contrast to the busy life of the crowded thoroughfares.

The quiet little retreat where the once brilliant Countess von Casambert now dwelt, enjoyed none of the advantages of this festival, save the genial rays of the bright spring sun, which gilt its old Gothic gables and windows, and warmed the portico beneath whose shelter Urica was wont to spend her days. The faintness and oppression under which she laboured, made it a necessity to her to pass much of her time in the open air; even at night, when her sufferings generally increased, she would often repair to her portico to breathe the fresh sea air, which alone could afford her relief.

During the last two days she had been deprived of her only society. Floris, as she well knew, had an important part to play in these festivities; and Hooft, of course, could not desert his post,—thus, as her two aged domestics never left her, she was wholly ignorant of the events of these days.

Seated, as usual, beneath her portico, her head leaning sadly on her hand, she listened with deep emotion to the roar of cannon which proclaimed the visit of the King of England to the arsenals, and his return to the palace. The royal honours which were so eagerly paid him, in anticipation of those awaiting him in his own country, too forcibly reminded her of her husband's death. To win these for the master to whom he was so faithfully attached, had been the object of his fond dreams, and, as Urica thought of the melancholy fate which had rewarded his loyalty, and the coldness of the king in acknowledging these services, she involuntarily exclaimed, with a deep sigh, "Ah, why do I live to see all this accomplished without him!"

Her face turned towards the sea, and as she raised her eyes from the ground, she observed a little boat approaching the shore. A young man, whose rich attire bespoke him to be an English cavalier, jumped out of it, and joined a group of children who were playing in front of a fisherman's cottage on the beach. He was evidently asking for a guide, since a few minutes afterwards he might be seen proceeding towards the little wicker-gate of Urica's dwelling, preceded by a barefooted urchin, to whom he threw a few guilders for his trouble.

As he walked up the avenue, Urica gazed on him with the deepest attention; a cry of surprise burst from her lips, for she had recognised

those noble features; then rising from her seat without assistance, she walked on slowly a few steps, borne up by the power of her feelings; she stretched out her hands towards him, and, as he threw himself at her feet, she said, with the fervour of inspiration, while she pressed his head to her bosom,

“ My God, I thank thee that thou hast permitted me to live to see my Fawcett’s son !”

The young man was deeply moved by the animation and enthusiasm which the thought of his being Lord Fawcett’s son had awakened in the dying Urica, for he could but too plainly trace in her emaciated form the signs of approaching dissolution. He led her back to her seat, and, kneeling down, clasped her hands in his, and gazed again and again into that pale face, as if to assure himself she was, indeed, that brilliant Urica who had been the admiration of his boyish days.

Urica’s eyes, too, were fixed upon him with melancholy earnestness; she had scrutinised and remembered each feature with painful eagerness. He was, indeed, the living image of him she had so deeply loved, and, although painfully reminded of her loss, she could not even for a moment withdraw her gaze.

Hitherto only single sentences had passed between them; no explanation had taken place, for Urica could not summon courage to talk of the past to Lord Fawcett’s son, and the young earl, on his part, was withheld from various motives from speaking first.

We have before said, that he had been brought up under the auspices of his grandmother—a bigoted Roman Catholic. Owing to the stirring life his father had led, and the disastrous fate that had befallen him, the young man had been left without any counteracting power to the influence of the Dowager Countess of Kilmaine and her confessor. His sister was a few years his senior, and had been brought up in the Roman Catholic faith; and Lord Henry, naturally of an amiable and gentle disposition, had been induced, through her entreaties, as well as the exhortations of the old countess and her confessor, to embrace their faith at an early age.

When Lady Kilmaine first heard of her son-in-law’s second marriage, she determined, ere she knew who this successor of her daughter was, to hate her cordially for this simple cause; and the fact she afterwards heard of Urica’s being a foreigner and a Protestant, only contributed to increase the bitterness and vehemence of her feelings.

Urica’s beauty, her dignified mien, her noble character, and all the pains she took to conciliate her husband’s mother-in-law, were of no avail. The latter clung to her bitter feelings and prejudices with blind obstinacy, and exerted all her influence to instil the same feelings into the minds of her grandchildren, by persuading them they were wronged and defrauded their rights and their father’s affections. She did not find much difficulty in creating a d^r-like in the mind of her granddaughter, who was naturally of a proud and suspicious temper; but all her representations failed in producing any effect on Lord Henry. He became warmly attached to his beautiful stepmother, who, on her part, sought to rouse his energy, and to awaken him from the mental lethargy into which, from delicate health and pliancy of disposition, he had fallen under the stern discipline of his grandmother. Lord Fawcett, as we have said, was often absent, and, therefore, ignorant of the state of affairs; and Urica, too, was soon obliged to part

from this gentle boy when she followed her husband to France, as no entreaties could prevail on the Countess Kilmaine to give up the rights she had acquired by Lord Fawcett's solemn agreement to preside over his early youth.

Though quite a boy at that time, no after-circumstance had power to overcome his affection for Urica, nor wholly to efface the influence she had exerted over his mind. The intrigues and artifices which Lady Kilmaine and her confessor employed to root out this impression, were innumerable and indescribable. They invented the basest falsehoods and calumnies against Urica, from the fear that their influence might be shaken through her means, and Lord Henry induced to forsake the new faith they had persuaded him to embrace. At a later period he was sent to Oxford by his father's desire; and it was while pursuing his studies there that Lord Fawcett's execution took place. Henry had loved this father with all the ardour and devotion of his generous nature, and looked up to him with enthusiastic admiration as the model it was his dearest desire to imitate. This sad event had the most painful influence upon him; all his hopes were crushed. He sank into a state of gloomy, hopeless sorrow, the ardour of his youth had fled, and life seemed to have lost its value for him.

In the mean time, neither age nor sorrow had weakened Lady Kilmaine's hatred to Urica; she continued to spread the most wicked reports concerning her, while her emissaries intercepted the letters Urica wrote at several intervals to the young earl after his father's death, as well as those he had written to her under the influence of his deep distress.

The continued dropping of water on the same spot will at length make an impression even on the hardest granite; and thus we must own that the young earl, unable to account for this enigmatical silence—his ears continually assailed by the same aspersions on her character—at length felt his trust in Urica somewhat shaken, and suffered himself to be dissuaded from his intention of seeking her out; but his morbid sensibility was so deeply wounded, that he now began to distrust the whole world, and was in danger of becoming a gloomy misanthrope.

Thus time passed, till General Monk's success had regained the crown for Charles II., and the young Earl of Fawcett, who had distinguished himself in this campaign, was named a member of the committee of lords who repaired to Holland to invite the king to take possession of his kingdom.

Circumstances had occurred since Lord Fawcett's arrival in this country to convince him of the falsehood of all he had heard concerning Urica; and had the shadow of a doubt still existed in his mind, her appearance, and the expression of deep sorrow and noble resignation on her pale countenance, would have chased it away for ever.

As he knelt at her feet, the self-reproach he felt for having allowed any one to influence him against her, kept him silent.

At length Urica, regaining composure, desired him to sit down and tell her why he had left all her letters unanswered. This broke the spell. Lord Fawcett, much surprised, replied he never had received any, and Urica's questions gradually led to the discovery of the truth. Though Lord Fawcett refrained from accusing any one but himself, Urica knew but too well to whom the blame was due. Yet she did not feel the slightest resentment. She was now superior to all petty irritability; she

only felt pity for the misguided individuals who thus degraded themselves, and for the unhappy youth, whose noble spirit had been crushed to become their tool.

As she led him to speak of his past life and his plans for the future, she observed with regret the gloomy despondency into which he had sunk, and the apathetic indifference with which he spoke of life.

"Alas!" said he, when she gently reproached him for this want of energy, "I was not born to be happy; the faults of my character and disposition must ever prevent my becoming so; my father's dreadful fate, too, has for ever destroyed the ardour of my youth. Ah, my mother! that sad stroke has irrecoverably despoiled both you and me of youth and vigour."

"Heaven forbid that you should think so, my son," replied Urica, with melancholy earnestness. "Yours is not the age for such a hopeless renunciation of happiness. Life has yet numerous claims on you; and, in seeking to meet them with energy and vigour, you will insensibly find the happiness you now despair of."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the approach of a light step; it was Floris, who came under Caas's escort to pay her evening visit to Urica. When she saw Lord Fawcett she stopped a moment, while a faint blush tinged her delicate cheek. Urica did not notice this, nor did she remark that the young lord's eye kindled with a brighter fire, for she was reflecting on what she had just said. She was not surprised at their being already acquainted, for Lord Fawcett had told her of his meeting with Floris, and the interest he had felt in listening to her account of his beloved stepmother. Turning to Floris, she asked for a description of her adventures; and thus time passed, till at length Urica reminded Floris she must return home to dress for the ball at the palace. She detained Lord Fawcett for a minute, to say she hoped to see him again on the ensuing day.

"Every day, my dearest mother," he replied. "As long as I am here, you cannot refuse me the happiness of seeing you, for which I have pined so long."

Thus saying, he tenderly kissed her hand, and returned towards the city.

The excitement into which Urica had been thrown by the events of this day, seemed strangely enough to have fanned the faint glimmering spark of her life into a gentle flame. She appeared to have regained her fading strength, and the quick penetration and lively sympathy which rendered her society so beneficial and so delightful to all who were privileged to enjoy it.

On the succeeding day the king left Amsterdam for Sheveling, where a squadron was waiting to carry him over to England. Lord Fawcett, however, remained behind. The king had charged him with a mission to the court of France, and entrusted him with private despatches to his mother, Queen Henrietta, who was still residing there. After having accompanied the royal *cortége* some miles out of town, he returned in the train of the city authorities, and eagerly repaired to Urica's little country-house.

He found her in her usual place, but she was not alone; Floris, pale and silent, was sitting at her feet, her lovely head reclining sadly on her hand, while she mingled her tears with those of her aunt for the loss of the noble

and excellent Madame van Marseeven, who had suddenly expired that morning.

When Lord Fawcett approached, Floris smiled faintly through her tears, and gave him her hand as to an old acquaintance.

The touching sorrow of Floris, and the animation of Urica, seemed to have lessened the difference between them; for, in spite of the ravages time and sorrow had committed on Urica's beauty, their resemblance surprised Lord Fawcett more than ever.

There was something inexplicably attractive to him in poor Floris's soft and melancholy mood, for his own inclination ever pointed that way, and thus no state of things could have been better calculated to increase the interest of these young people for each other. Added to this, Néess had been so alarmed at the violence of Floris's grief at the death of her excellent friend, that he had yielded more easily than usual to H. oft's proposal that he should leave the poor girl at liberty to seek relief for her sorrow in visiting her friends.

She could find no admittance in the house of mourning, for Mynherr van Marseeven, in the gloomy selfishness of sorrow, had sent his two youngest daughters—the only ones who were yet single—to the houses of their married sisters, and insisted on keeping watch alone near the corpse of his wife, inaccessible to every one else; and thus Floris eagerly repaired to her beloved aunt, Urica, there to seek comfort for her aching heart.

She certainly found more gratification there than she expected, for she had not thought of meeting Lord Fawcett, who she imagined would not return till night. It was with difficulty she disguised her emotion, on hearing that he was to depart in a few days on his embassy to France. Yet, perhaps, the certainty of this approaching separation rendered the intercourse of these young people more easy and unrestrained, and increased the charm they felt in each other's society.

Urica's earnest solicitude for Lord Fawcett's happiness induced her to observe him closely, in hopes of obtaining a true insight into his character, and perhaps warding off, in some measure, the evil influence which had bowed down his spirits.

She was enchanted by the noble qualities of his mind—necessarily apparent even to the most cursory observer; yet his character filled her with serious alarm, for the most estimable and amiable qualities were mingled with the most dangerous elements of weakness—distrust of himself and others,—a natural disposition to violence, which, though it seldom broke forth, yet evidently existed in his mind,—and a sort of dreamy indolence, tending to misanthropy and a love of solitude. She felt that all these qualities exposed him to the danger of becoming a tool in the hands of those who knew his faults, and possessed sufficient penetration to call them into action.

His acquirements were very extensive, and his taste refined and cultivated. Whenever he overcame his usual taciturnity, his conversation was well chosen, and displayed much talent and judgment. Yet it was evident he withdrew from thus exerting himself whenever he could, and preferred listening to others in dreamy inactivity. But, when alone with Urica he was led to unburden his heart to her, she was ready to weep at the state of discouragement into which he had fallen, and the prevailing tendency in him to see everything in life only from its darkest side.

On the last day of his stay in Amsterdam, Urica was destined to experience a deeper cause for anxiety, for she suddenly discovered a strange alteration in Lord Fawcett and Floris.

While the former evinced an animation and cheerfulness of manner which could not be the offspring of his natural disposition, Floris had exchanged her happy composure and frank easy manner for a certain bashfulness and timidity, while her eyes sunk, and her heart throbbed beneath Lord Fawcett's ardent gaze.

Urica really loved Floris as if she had been her own daughter, and hence arose her anxiety; she trembled for the happiness of her niece, if Lord Fawcett's love should lead him to desire a union with her; she knew the character and opinions of his relations, and feared the influence they exercised over him. She was convinced the connexion would be highly displeasing to them, and Floris, alone in a strange land, would be quite at their mercy, while her being a zealous Protestant would provide them with a ready point of attack; for Urica knew the young earl clung to his faith with conscientious anxiety, and refrained from employing his reason or judgment to test its truth, as a temptation he was bound to resist.

The existence of this danger had not been fully impressed on Urica's mind till the morning of this day, when Floris yielded to Lord Fawcett's entreaties to pay her a visit at her father's house. His expressions of delight on receiving this permission, and their corresponding effects on Floris, could not be mistaken; and when the gondola was ready in which the young people were to proceed thither by the canal, accompanied by Ulla, the young earl knelt down at Urica's feet, his countenance radiant with joy, and cried, "Oh, my mother, I shall have to thank you for recovering the happiness of my life!" she felt at once what he meant by these words; and the reflections we have already alluded to occurred to her mind, and terminated in the conviction that it was her duty to prevent this union, or at least to retard it, and give all the parties concerned time for mature consideration.

She had taken but little interest in this visit to Van der Néess's house, as she deemed it an event of little importance, or merely a whim of the young earl's to see whether Floris would be disconcerted by the vulgar appearance of her father, of which he had heard so much; but now Urica looked on this visit as an important crisis, which might produce an influence favourable to her views, since she hoped much from the impression Néess could not fail to create on a man of Lord Fawcett's high breeding and refined feelings.

But Urica forgot that when a man is in love ere he is sure of the object of his affections, he never meets with any obstacle but he construes it into a new cause for persevering in his determination. Thus the effect of Van der Néess's appearance on Lord Fawcett was only to strengthen his love for Floris, by convincing himself she was in an unworthy situation. He pictured himself as her deliverer; and his generous spirit rejoiced at the idea of offering her a brilliant position in life, instead of one that appeared to him so ignominious.

Van der Néess, at first, felt angry and uneasy to see a Fawcett enter his house. He imagined he must be in reduced circumstances, and feared an attack upon his cash; but when this apprehension was removed, his manner became deferential and cringing to a revolting degree.

To any one who was not acquainted with this train of thought, the coarse speeches Van der Néess at first addressed to the young lord must have been incomprehensible. The surprise, nay, the terror of Lord Fawcett, when he saw Van der Néess, and the struggle which took place in his mind ere he could bring himself to believe this repulsive vulgar man to be the father of his beautiful Floris, prevented his taking any notice of what was said. But he felt indignant to see Floris busy herself about Van der Néess with affectionate eagerness, while she strove, by her enchanting sweetness, to dissipate his sullen, suspicious humour. When she turned away from her father, Lord Fawcett thought she could no longer be the same, and that something of this hateful communion must adhere to her ; and when she approached him, he felt a sort of coolness towards her, and looked at her with embarrassment, as if he thought she were making game of him, and all this would turn out some coarse jest, and it would be proved at last that this low man was not her father after all.

Van der Néess, of course, had no idea of all this, and it was no easy matter to make him understand the tone he ought to assume towards the young lord, for Floris refrained from exercising her accustomed influence over her father, partly from the preoccupation of her mind, and partly, because more than ever, nay, perhaps for the first time in her life, she felt ashamed of his personal appearance.

Nor did the young people succeed in recovering their good-humour ; Van der Néess, satisfied by the composed answers of the young earl, that the latter had regained possession of his confiscated estates, changed his rude tone to one of cringing civility ; but this made him appear, if possible, more repulsive, and the young people soon withdrew from his society, under the pretext of visiting the court of pleasure.

Urica easily observed that both Lord Fawcett and Floris had been put out by this unlucky visit ; but far from being displeased, she rejoiced that they should have experienced an interruption to the feelings which had hitherto absorbed them, and cherished a hope that the same cause might prove an obstacle to any further advances. Nor did Lord Fawcett hesitate to express his surprise to Urica at the wide dissimilarity between the father and daughter. She smiled in secret at the reluctance he showed to believe in the reality of this relationship ; yet he could never mention Floris's name without evident emotion.

Lord Fawcett's mission to the court of France was of a delicate and important nature. It was the first time he appeared in a public character, and he was naturally anxious to acquitted himself worthily of the trust reposed in him. Notwithstanding the empire Floris exercised over his mind, his approaching departure induced him to turn his thoughts to this subject ; and as he had never been in France, he applied to Urica for some advice regarding the course he should adopt at this court, which was rising to its highest glory under Louis XIV., and attracted the eyes of all Europe.

No one could be better qualified to give advice on this subject than Urica. She had only to call to mind her own sojourn at the court of Versailles, and through her correspondence with her royal friend, the unhappy Henrietta, she was perfectly aware of all that passed at that intriguing court, and this enabled her to give the young chargé d'affaires an accurate description of the state of things, which could not fail to be of service to him. She was the more ready to undertake this task, from

a wish to fill up the time with serious conversation, in order to turn Lord Fawcett's thoughts from Floris, and prevent his being led to make any declaration of his sentiments to her niece.

But though she succeeded in this particular, it was not in her power to prevent his making a confession to *herself* of his feelings with regard to Floris. Lord Fawcett followed her into her closet, whither she retired to finish a letter to the queen, and throwing himself at her feet, he cried,

“ My mother, during the short time I have lived with you, you have given a new turn to my life. You have aroused me from my selfish languor; and, if ever I become worthy of the name of Fawcett, I shall owe it to you, who have taught me what noble exertions such a name demands of him who bears it. Trust me, your kind solicitude for my welfare shall not be thrown away; but now, I beseech you go, a step farther yet, and make me happy—permit me to sue for Floris, and promise me the happiness of possessing her on my return.”

Urica was thrown off her guard by this sudden attack. All her objections rushed forcibly to her mind, and she exclaimed, with her old vehemence of manner,

“ Never! Henry, never! It must not be; think no more of it. Promise me you will not. No, Henry; do not look so sad, but, indeed, it cannot be!”

Urica had no sooner said this, than she felt she had placed *herself* in an embarrassing position by her refusal; she was apprehensive of appearing harsh, and checking the self-confidence she had succeeded in arousing, by telling him the true cause of her objection, which existed merely in his character; and yet she felt that if she alleged no reasons, her simple refusal would not suffice to quell his ardour.

A glance at Lord Fawcett convinced her of this; yet it was not merely sorrow that she read in his countenance, but an access of the violence she had before discovered formed part of his character. Starting to his feet, he exclaimed, in a tone of offended pride,

“ Ha! is it thus you refuse her to me? and will you give me no reason for this mortifying rejection? What objections, I wonder, can you have to my union with her, when I find none, after I have seen the miserable abode where she has been brought up, and the low vulgar wretch whom she terms her father?”

Urica saw he was trembling; his countenance grew pale, and his eyes sparkled with anger, while all his movements betrayed uncontrollable violence.

“ Ah!” thought she, “ how fully this vehemence justifies my determination!” She remained silent for some minutes, absorbed in melancholy thought, and considered how much of the truth she might reveal, without running the risk of discouraging him too much.

But her silence seemed to increase his excitement, and he vented his feelings in incoherent exclamations.

“ Henry,” said she at last, in a mild, but serious manner, “ you forget yourself. Say, what security can you, with your present disposition, offer to a girl for the happiness of her life?”

Lord Fawcett looked anxiously at Urica; but his passionate excitement was past, and with noble candour he acknowledged himself in fault.

“ Forgive me,” he said; “ I was in the wrong. But, mother, you wound

me to the heart by your decided refusal. And is that the reason? Does my character inspire you with so much distrust?" he added, sadly.

"Henry," replied Urica, in a gentle but decided tone, "you must learn to become happy yourself, and through yourself, ere you can offer happiness to another being whose fate you seek to unite with yours. You confess that you have but lately acquired a correct view of your duties in life—do not imagine I doubt the sincerity of your noble resolutions—but you must put these into practice, and prove their influence on your conduct in active life, ere you can acquire that stability of character which will enable you to become the founder of domestic happiness, and ere those who love you and the maiden of your choice will cease to oppose your wishes.

"Ha," exclaimed Lord Fawcett, eagerly, "would every objection then be removed that now rends you so decided to oppose them?"

"I know not," said Urica, thoughtfully. "Henry, you are a Roman Catholic, and your church will ever possess a ruling power over your life: I tremble to think of the trials to which a wife of a different persuasion might be exposed."

"Ah, mother," cried Henry, reproachfully, "do you deem me so weak as to be unable to protect the wife I have chosen?"

"Remember, too," continued Urica, "that Floris's descent from so low a person as this Jacob van der Néess, may be accounted a reproach to her."

"Fear not," replied the earl; "I shall ward that off from her."

"Enough," cried Urica, rising in some excitement; "I have given you sufficient reasons for my determination, and I must persist in my desire that you do not compromise your liberty, or that of Floris, by any declaration of your feelings. It is proper you should enter your new active career unshackled by any engagement, in order to be able to devote your attention more fully to all the interests and demands of life. I see it is useless to say any more now on the subject that has excited your passions and led your judgment captive; but, at a future period, you will thank me for my decision."

Lord Fawcett, too, arose—a violent struggle took place in his breast—but though his pride had been severely wounded by Urica's refusal, he was too candid to deny to himself that there was much reason in what she had said; therefore, summoning up all his resolution, he exclaimed, after a moment's silence,

"You shall not say that I have refused you the first active testimony of my obedience. I will prove to you how much I love and honour you, by submitting to your will in spite of the severest temptation to disobedience I have ever experienced."

Floris had in the mean time been sitting beneath the portico in a deep reverie. A secret presentiment, suggested by the quick penetration of love, told her she was the subject of this long conference between Lord Fawcett and her aunt, and she vainly sought to conceal her agitation from Cornelius Hooft, who was sitting beside her, exhausting himself in fruitless attempts to attract her attention.

At length Urica and Lord Fawcett joined them. Floris instantly remarked a change in his manner—the natural result of this conversation. He had previously deemed himself secure of his end, and only waited for Urica's consent, of which he never doubted, to pour out his whole heart

at the feet of his beloved; and how different the course he had to adopt now! But Floris interpreted his embarrassment and distress into coldness; and as she had on this day first felt shame at her father's vulgar nature, she attributed this sudden change in Henry's manner to his discovery of her low birth.

This thought occasioned her the most poignant sorrow; no misfortune had ever before wounded her feelings so deeply; but her maidenly pride was aroused, and she hastily determined for ever to conceal from him her hopes and feelings.

Thus resolved, she quietly kept her seat near Urica, nor once raised her eye to look at Lord Fawcett, who could scarcely command his emotion as the hour of separation arrived. At length he was obliged to depart. When he had taken leave of Urica, he knelt down for a moment before Floris, who was trembling in every limb. He uttered not a word, but in excessive agitation pressed her hand to his lips with a deep sigh, hid his face for a moment in her veil, and then hastened from the spot.

When he was gone, Floris sank fainting into her aunt's arms, overwhelmed by the deep sorrow of her young heart. Urica bent with anxious solicitude over her darling. She understood her feelings. At length she succeeded in restoring animation. Floris opened her eyes in alarm; and, when she saw the beloved countenance of her aunt fixed on her with an expression of pity and love, she heaved a deep sigh, and a flood of tears relieved her bursting heart.

"Weep, my poor child, weep," said Urica. "I can enter into your feelings, and, when you are more composed, I will give you a proof of my esteem, by telling you what passed between Henry and me."

Floris no longer expected to receive comfort from what she might hear. When she had heard from Urica an account of the conversation that had proved so fatal to her hopes, the only thing that was impressed on her mind was the conviction that Henry still loved her, and that only her aunt's interference had prevented her receiving from his lips a confirmation of the hopes she had unconsciously cherished.

Yet she did not feel the slightest resentment towards her aunt, but, after a while, asked her to repeat the reasons which had influenced her decision.

She listened with an air of resignation as Urica complied with this request; and though she at first combated her aunt's objections, the latter at length succeeded in convincing her of their justice; and the happiness she had at first felt from the certainty of being loved by the earl, gave way to deep dejection. She sank into a melancholy reverie, and Urica, who felt for her with a mother's tenderness, forbore to disturb her thoughts, and shared her sorrow.

At length Caas poked his good-humoured face in at the gate, and roused them from their thoughtful mood. The moon had risen above the water, and its mild rays fell on the surrounding scene. Floris arose, calm and silent; as she knelt down before Urica, the moon shone full upon her face. She was very pale and fixed her sad eyes inquiringly upon her aunt, as if she would ask, "Is this life?" But there was no shadow of distrust or bitterness in her noble countenance; its expression was one of humble, passive resignation to the heavy trial imposed upon her.

Both Floris and her aunt knew they should not meet again for several

days, since Van der Néess had a right to complain of having been neglected by Floris during this latter time, and would not fail to make this a reason for keeping her at home; thus their parting was affectionate, though they dared not trust themselves to say much. Floris imprinted a farewell kiss on her aunt's cheek, and then slowly walked down the avenue, followed by Caas. When she arrived at the gate, she examined her veil; there was no doubt of the fact, the blue rosette was gone, and even the corner of her blue gauze veil, was torn off—it had evidently ceded to some secret deed of violence; a faint gleam of joy lit up her pale features; she timidly raised the torn end of her veil to her lips; then, alarmed at this bold action, she blushed deeply, and suddenly quickening her steps, ran down to the shore so hastily, that Caas, infinitely surprised, was obliged to exchange his pace for a quick trot, in order to keep up with her.

The evening was even more lovely on the water than on the land; a grey mist slept on the opposite shore of the canal, which was very broad, and the oars sparkled in the moonshine every time they pierced the deep blue waters. Everything around bore an air of peaceful repose; the inhabitants of the fishing-huts on the shore sat at the doors of their dwellings, enjoying their evening repose, while some few still lingered in their fishing skiffs; and Floris, sad and solitary, in the same boat in which, a few hours previous, she had gone in the same direction, accompanied by one who was now, perhaps, lost to her for ever, and in whom all her hopes of happiness were centred.

Suddenly, a bright flash gleamed through the mist, and the thunder of cannon rolled over the waters.

"Merciful God! what is that?" cried Floris, burying her face in her hands.

"It is the signal of an English ambassador leaving the port," replied Caas. "The French vessel which is to take him away is to sail to-morrow morning early, and, therefore, he goes on board to-night."

Floris wept bitterly, and the next shots seemed to pierce her heart. Lord Fawcett, the chargé d'affaires of the King of England, who was now proceeding towards the vessel that was to carry him to the coasts of the mighty kingdom of France, what a different person he seemed from Henry at Urica's feet! A deep unutterable feeling of woe took possession of her heart. Just as the last shot resounded through the air, the boat stopped at Jacob's court of business.

Drawing her veil over her tearful countenance, Floris followed Caas, who unlocked the door of the little court of pleasure, and then discreetly withdrew.

She advanced towards the old lime-tree, and threw herself into the seat beneath its sheltering branches, the third daughter of the Casamborts who bedewed it with her tears. The moon again rose above the wall of the court, and shone on the marble slabs, where, in former days, Floris, in the happy innocence of childhood, performed her fanciful moonshine dance, watched over with affection and solicitude by those eyes that were now closed in death. She wept over all she had lost, till, at length, wearied with sorrow and weeping, she threw herself on her couch, and her heavy eyelids sank in sleep.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. AINSWORTH begs it to be distinctly understood that no Contributions whatever sent him, either for the NEW MONTHLY or AINSWORTH'S MAGAZINES, will be returned. All articles are sent at the risk of the writers, who should invariably keep copies.





THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

CHAPTER III.

THE ASHETONS.

BETWEEN Sir Ralph Assheton of the Abbey and the inhabitants of Whalley, many of whom were his tenants, he being joint lord of the manor with John Braddyll of Portfield, the best possible feeling subsisted; for though somewhat austere in manner, and tinctured with Puritanism, the worthy knight was sufficiently shrewd, or more correctly speaking, sufficiently liberal-minded, to be tolerant of the opinions of others, and being moreover sincere in his own religious views, no man could call him in question for them; besides which he was very hospitable to his friends, very bountiful to the poor, a good landlord, and a humane man. His very austerity of manner, tempered by stately courtesy, added to the respect he inspired, especially as he could now and then relax into gaiety, and when he did so, his smile was accounted singularly sweet. But in general he was grave and formal; stiff in attire, and stiff in gait; cold and punctilious in manner, precise in speech, and exacting in due respect from both high and low, which was seldom, if ever, refused him. Amongst Sir Ralph's other good qualities, for such it was esteemed by his friends and retainers, and they were, of course, the best judges, was a strong love of the chase, and perhaps he indulged a little too freely in the sports of the field, for a gentleman of a character so staid and decorous; but his popularity was far from being diminished by the circumstance; neither did he suffer the rude and boisterous companionship into which he was brought by indulgence in this his favourite pursuit in any way to affect him. Though still young, Sir Ralph was prematurely gray, and this combined with the sad severity of his aspect, gave him the air of one considerably past the middle term of life, though this appearance was contradicted again by the youthful fire of his eagle eye. His features were handsome and strongly marked and he wore a pointed beard and moustaches, with a shaved cheek. Sir Ralph Assheton had married twice, his first wife being a daughter of Sir James Bellingham, of Levens, in Northumberland, by whom he had two children; while his second choice fell upon Eleanor Shuttleworth, the lovely and well-endowed heiress of Gawthorpe, to whom he had been recently united. In his attire, even when habited for the chase or a merry-making, like the present, the Knight of Whalley affected a sombre colour, and ordinarily wore a quilted

doublet of black silk, immense trunk hose of the same material, stiffened with whalebone, puffed out well-wadded sleeves, falling bands, for he eschewed the ruff as savouring of vanity, boots of black flexible leather, ascending to the hose, and armed with spurs with gigantic rowels, a round-crowned small-brimmed black hat, with an ostrich feather placed in the side and hanging over the top, a long rapier on his hip, and a dagger in his girdle. This buckram attire, it will be easily conceived, contributed no little to the natural stiffness of his thin tall figure.

Sir Ralph Assheton was great-grandson of Richard Assheton, who flourished in the time of Abbot Paslew, and who, in conjunction with John Braddyll, fourteen yearr after the unfortunate prelate's attainder and the dissolution of the monastery, had purchased the abbey and domains of Whalley from the Crown, subsequently to which, a division of the property so granted took place between them, the abbey and part of the manor falling to the share of Richard Assheton, whose descendants had now, for three generations, made it their residence. Thus the whole of Whalley belonged to the families of Assheton and Braddyll, which had intermarried; the latter, as has been stated, dwelling at Portfield, a fine old seat in the neighbourhood.

A very different person from Sir Ralph was his cousin Nicholas Assheton, of Downham, who, except as regards his Puritanism, might be considered a type of the Lancashire squire of the day. A precian in religious notions, and constant in attendance at church and lecture, he put no sort of restraint upon himself, but mixed up fox-hunting, otter-hunting, shooting at the mark, and perhaps shooting with the long-bow, foot-racing, horse-racing, and, in fact, every other kind of country diversion, not forgetting tippling, cards, and dicing, with daily devotion, discourses, and psalm-singing, in the oddest way imaginable. A thorough sportsman was Squire Nicholas Assheton, well versed in all the arts and mysteries of hawking and hunting. Not a man in the county could ride harder, hunt deer, unkennel fox, unearth badger, or spear otter, better than he. And then, as to tippling, he would sit you a whole afternoon at the alehouse, and be the merriest man there, and drink a bout with every farmer present. And if the parson chanced to be out of hearing, he would never make a mouth at a round oath, nor choose a second expression when the first would serve his turn. Then, who so constant at church or lecture as Squire Nicholas—though he did snore sometimes during the long sermons of his cousin, the Rector of Middleton. A great man was he at all weddings, christenings, churchings, and funerals, and never neglected his bottle at these ceremonies, nor any sport in doors or out of doors, meanwhile. In short, such a roystering Puritan was never known. A good-looking young man was the Squire of Downham, possessed of a very athletic frame, and a most vigorous constitution, which helped him, together with the prodigious exercise he took, through any excess. He had a sanguine complexion, with a broad, good-natured visage, which he could lengthen at will in a surprising manner. His hair was cropped close to his head, and the razor did daily duty over his cheek and chin, giving him the roundhead look, some years later, characteristic of the Puritanical party. Nicholas had taken to wife Dorothy, daughter of Richard Greenacres of Worston, and was most fortunate in his choice, which is more than can be said for his lady, for I cannot uphold the squire as a model of conjugal fidelity. Report affirmed that he

loved more than one pretty girl under the rose. Squire Nicholas was not particular as to the quality or make of his clothes, provided they wore well and protected him against the weather, and was generally to be seen in doublet and hose of stout fustian, which had seen some service, with a broad-leaved hat, originally green, but of late bleached to a much lighter colour; but he was clad on this particular occasion in ash-coloured habiliments fresh from the tailor's hands, with buff boots drawn up to the knee, and a new round hat from York with a green feather in it. His legs were slightly bowed, and he bore himself like a man rarely out of the saddle.

Downham, the residence of the squire, was a fine old house, very charmingly situated to the north of Pendle Hill, of which it commanded a magnificent view, and a few miles from Clithero. The grounds about it were well-wooded and beautifully broken and diversified, watered by the Ribble, and opening upon the lovely and extensive valley deriving its name from that stream. The house was in good order and well maintained, and the stables plentifully furnished with horses, while the hall was adorned with various trophies and implements of the chase; but as I propose paying its owner a visit, I shall defer any further description of the place till an opportunity arrives for examining it in detail.

A third cousin of Sir Ralph's, though in the second degree, likewise present on the May Day in question, was the Reverend Abdias Assheton, Rector of Middleton, a very worthy man, who though differing from his kinsman upon some religious points, and not altogether approving of the conduct of one of them, was on good terms with both. The Rector of Middleton was portly and middle-aged, fond of ease and reading, and by no means indifferent to the good things of life. He was unmarried, and passed much of his time at Middleton Hall, the seat of his near relative Sir Richard Assheton, to whose family he was greatly attached, and whose residence closely adjoined the rectory.

A fourth cousin, also present, was young Richard Assheton, of Middleton, eldest son and heir of the owner of that estate. Possessed of all the good qualities largely distributed among his kinsmen, with none of their drawbacks, this young man was as tolerant and bountiful as Sir Ralph, without his austerity and sectarianism; as keen a sportsman and as bold a rider as Nicholas, without his propensities to excess; as studious, at times, and as well read as Abdias, without his laziness and self-indulgence; and as courtly and well-bred as his father, Sir Richard, who was esteemed one of the most perfect gentlemen in the county, without his haughtiness. Then he was the handsomest of his race, though the Asshetons were accounted the handsomest family in Lancashire, and no one minded yielding the palm to young Richard, even if it could be contested, he was so modest and unassuming. At this time, Richard Assheton was about two and twenty, tall, gracefully and slightly formed, but possessed of such remarkable vigour, that even his cousin Nicholas could scarcely compete with him in athletic exercises. His features were fine and regular, with an almost Phrygian precision of outline; his hair was of a dark brown, and fell in clustering curls over his brow and neck; and his complexion was fresh and blooming, and set off by a slight beard and moustache, carefully trimmed and pointed. His dress consisted of a dark green doublet, with wide velvet hose, embroidered and fringed, descending nearly to the knee, where they were tied with points and ribands.

met by dark stockings, and terminated by red velvet shoes with roses in them. A white feather adorned his black broad-leaved hat, and he had a rapier by his side.

Amongst Sir Ralph Assheton's guests were Richard Greenacres, of Worston, Nicholas Assheton's father-in-law; Richard Sherborne, of Dunnow, near Sladecburne, who had married Dorothy, Nicholas's sister; Mistress Robinson, of Raydale House, aunt to the knight and the squire, and two of her sons, both stout youths, with John Braddyll and his wife, of Portfield. Besides these, there was Master Roger Nowell, a justice of the peace in the county, and a very active and busy one too, who had been invited for an especial purpose, to be explained hereafter. Head of an ancient Lancashire family, residing at Read, a fine old hall, some little distance from Whalley, Roger Nowell, though a worthy, well-meaning man, dealt hard measure from the bench, and seldom tempered justice with mercy. He was sharp-featured, dry, and sarcastic, and being adverse to country sports, his presence on the occasion was the only thing likely to impose restraint on the revellers. Other guests there were, but none of particular note.

The ladies of the party consisted of Lady Assheton, Mistress Nicholas Assheton, of Downham, Dorothy Assheton, of Middleton, sister to Richard, a lovely girl of eighteen, with light fleecy hair, summer blue eyes, and a complexion of exquisite purity, Mistress Sherborne, of Dunnow, Mistress Robinson, of Raydale, and Mistress Braddyll, of Portfield, before-mentioned, together with the wives and daughters of some others of the neighbouring gentry; most noticeable amongst whom was Mistress Alice Nutter, of Rough Lee, in Pendle Forest, a widow lady, and a relative of the Assheton family.

Mistress Nutter might be a year or two turned of forty, but she still retained a very fine figure, and much beauty of feature, though of a cold and disagreeable cast. She was dressed in mourning, though her husband had been dead several years, and her rich dark habiliments well became her pale complexion and raven hair. A proud poor gentleman was Richard Nutter, her late husband, and his scanty means not enabling him to keep up as large an establishment as he desired, or to be as hospitable as his nature prompted, his temper became soured, and he visited his ill-humours upon his wife, who, devotedly attached to him, to all outward appearance at least, never resented his ill-treatment. All at once, and without any previous symptoms of ailment, or apparent cause, unless it might be over-fatigue in hunting the day before, Richard Nutter was seized with a strange and violent illness, which after three or four days of acute suffering, brought him to the grave. During his illness he was constantly and zealously tended by his wife, but he displayed great aversion to her, declaring himself bewitched, and that an old woman was ever in the corner of his room mumbling wicked enchantments against him. But as no such old woman could be seen, these assertions were treated as delirious ravings. They were not, however, forgotten after his death, and some people said that he had certainly been bewitched, and that a waxen image made in his likeness, and stuck full of pins, had been picked up in his chamber by Mistress Alice and cast into the fire, and as soon as it melted he had expired. Such tales only obtained credence with the common folk; but as Pendle Forest was a sort of weird region, many reputed witches dwelling in it, they were the more readily believed,

even by those who acquitted Mistress Nutter of all share in the dark transaction.

Mistress Nutter gave the best proof that she respected her husband's memory by not marrying again, and she continued to lead a very secluded life at Rough Lee, a lonesome house in the heart of the forest. She lived quite by herself, for she had no children, her only daughter having perished somewhat strangely when quite an infant. Though a relative of the Asshetons, she kept up little intimacy with them, and it was a matter of surprise to all that she had been drawn from her seclusion to attend the present revel. Her motive, however, in visiting the Abbey, was to obtain the assistance of Sir Ralph Assheton, in settling a dispute between her and Roger Nowell, relative to the boundary line of part of their properties which came together; and this was the reason why the magistrate had been invited to Whalley. After hearing both sides of the question, and examining plans of the estates, which he knew to be accurate, Sir Ralph, who had been appointed umpire, pronounced a decision in favour of Roger Nowell, but Mistress Nutter refusing to abide by it, the settlement of the matter was postponed till the day but one following, between which time the landmarks were to be investigated by a certain little lawyer named Potts, who attended on behalf of Roger Nowell; together with Nicholas and Richard Assheton, on behalf of Mistress Nutter. Upon their evidence it was agreed by both parties that Sir Ralph should pronounce a final decision, to be accepted by them, and to that effect they signed an agreement. The three persons appointed to the investigation settled to start for Rough Lee early on the following morning.

A word as to Master Thomas Potts. This worthy was an attorney from London, who had officiated as clerk of the court at the assizes at Lancaster, where his quickness had so much pleased Roger Nowell, that he sent for him to Read to manage this particular business. A sharp-witted fellow was Potts, and versed in all the quirks and tricks of a very subtle profession—not over-scrupulous, provided a client would pay well; prepared to resort to any expedient to gain his object, and quite conversant enough with both practice and precedent to keep himself straight. A bustling consequential little personage was he, moreover; very fond of delivering an opinion, even when unasked, and of a meddling, make-mischief turn, constantly setting men by the ears. A suit of rusty black, a parchment-coloured skin, small wizen features, a turn-up nose, scant eyebrows, and a great yellow forehead constituted his external man. He partook of the hospitality at the Abbey, but had his quarters at the Dragon. He it was who counselled Roger Nowell to abide by the decision of Sir Ralph, confidently assuring him that he must carry his point.

This dispute was not, however, the only one the knight had to adjust, or in which Master Potts was concerned. A claim had recently been made by a certain Sir Thomas Metcalfe, of Nappay, in Wensleydale, near Bainbridge, to the house and manor of Raydale, belonging to his neighbour, John Robinson, whose lady as has been shown, was a relative of the Asshetons. Robinson himself had gone to London to obtain advice on the subject, while Sir Thomas Metcalfe, who was a man of violent disposition, had threatened to take forcible possession of Raydale, if it were not delivered to him without delay, and to eject the Robinson family. Having consulted Potts, however, on the subject, whom he had met at Read, the latter strongly dissuaded him from the course, and recommended him to call to his aid the strong arm of the law; but this he

rejected, though he ultimately agreed to refer the matter to Sir Ralph Assheton, and for this purpose he had come over to Whalley, and was at present a guest at the vicarage. Thus it will be seen that Sir Ralph Assheton had his hands full, while the little London lawyer, Master Potts, was tolerably well occupied. Besides Sir Thomas Metcalfe, Sir Richard Molyneux, and Mr. Parker, of Brownsholme, were guests of Dr. Ormerod at the vicarage.

Such was the large company assembled to witness the May Day revels at Whalley, and if harmonious feelings did not exist amongst all of them, little outward manifestation was made of enmity. The dresses and appointments of the pageant having been provided by Sir Ralph Assheton, who, Puritan as he was, encouraged all harmless country pastimes, it was deemed necessary to pay him every respect, even if no other feeling would have prompted the attention, and therefore the troop had stopped on seeing him and his guests issue from the Abbey gate. At pretty nearly the same time Doctor Ormerod and his party came from the vicarage towards the green.

No order of march was observed, but Sir Ralph and his lady, with two of his children by the former marriage, walked first. Then came some of the other ladies, with the Rector of Middleton, John Braddyll, and the two sons of Mistress Robinson. Next came Mistress Nutter, Roger Nowell and Potts walking after her, eyeing her maliciously, as her proud figure swept on before them. Even if she saw their looks or overheard their jeers, she did not deign to notice them. Lastly came young Richard Assheton, of Middleton, and Squire Nicholas, both in high spirits, and laughing and chatting together.

"A brave day for the morris-dancers, cousin Dick," observed Nicholas Assheton, as they approached the green, "and plenty of folk to witness the sport. Half my lads from Downham are here, and I see a good many of your Middleton chaps among them. How are you, Farmer Tetlow?" he added to a stout, hale-looking man, with a blooming countrywoman by his side—"brought your pretty young wife to the rush-bearing, I see."

"Yeigh, squoire," rejoined the farmer, "an' nighly pleased hoo be w' it, too."

"Happy to hear it, Master Tetlow," replied Nicholas, "she'll be better pleased before the day's over, I'll warrant her. I'll dance a round with her myself in the hall at night."

"Theere now, Meg, whoy dunna ye may t' squoire a curtsey, wench, an' thonk him," said Tetlow, nudging his pretty wife, who had turned away rather embarrassed by the free gaze of the Squire. Nicholas, however, did not wait for the curtsey, but went away, laughing, to overtake Richard Assheton, who had walked on.

"Ah, here's Frank Garside," he continued, espying another rustic acquaintance. "Halloa, Frank, I'll come over one day next week, and try for a fox in Easington Woods. We missed the last, you know. Tom Brockholes, are you here? Just ridden over from Sladeburn, eh? When is that shooting match at the bodkin to come off, eh? Mind, it is to be at twenty-two roods' distance. Ride over to Downham on Thursday next, Tom. We're to have a footrace, and I'll show you good sport, and at night we'll have a lusty drinking bout at the alehouse. On Friday, we'll take out the great nets, and try for salmon in the Ribble. I took

some fine fish on Monday—one salmon of ten pounds' weight, the largest I've got the whole season. I brought it with me to-day to the Abbey. There's an otter in the river, and I won't hunt him till you come, Tom. I shall see you on Thursday, eh?"

Receiving an answer in the affirmative, Squire Nicholas walked on, nodding right and left, jesting with the farmers, and ogling their pretty wives and daughters.

"I tell you what, cousin Dick," he said, calling after Richard Assheton, who had got in advance of him, "I'll match my dun nag 'against your gray gelding for twenty pieces, that I reach the boundary line of the Rough Lee lands before you to-morrow. What, you won't have it? You know I shall beat you—ha! ha! Well, we'll try the speed of the two tits the first day we hunt the stag in Bowland Forest. Odds my life!" he cried, suddenly altering his deportment, and lengthening his visage, "if there isn't our parson here. Stay with me, cousin Dick, stay with me. Give you good day, worthy Mr. Dewhurst," he added, taking off his hat to the divine, who respectfully returned his salutation, "I did not look to see your reverence here, taking part in these vanities and idle sports. I propose to call on you on Saturday, and pass an hour in serious discourse. I would call to-morrow, but I have to ride over to Pendle on business. Tarry a moment for me, I pray you, good cousin Richard. I fear, reverend sir, that you will see much here that will scandalise you; much lightness and indecorum. Pleasanter far would it be to me to see a large congregation of the elders flocking together to a godly meeting, than crowds assembled for such a profane purpose. Another moment, Richard. My cousin is a young man, Mr. Dewhurst, and wishes to join the revel. But we must make allowances, worthy and reverend sir, until the world shall improve. An excellent discourse you gave us, good sir, on Sunday—viii. Rom. 12 and 13 verses: it is graven upon my memory, but I have made a note of it in my diary. I come to you, cousin, I come. I pray you walk on to the Abbey, good Mr. Dewhurst, where you will be right welcome, and call for any refreshment you may desire—a glass of good sack, and a slice of venison pasty, on which we have just dined—and there is some famous old ale, which I would commend to you, but that I know you care not, any more than myself, for creature comforts. Farewell, reverend sir. I will join you ere long, for these scenes have little attraction for me. But I must take care that my young cousin falleth not into harm."

And as the divine took his way to the Abbey, he added, laughingly, to Richard—a good riddance, Dick. I would not have the old fellow play the spy upon us. Ah, Giles Mercer," he added, stopping again—"and Jeff Rushton—well met, lads! what, are you come to the wake? I shall be at John Lawe's in the evening, and we'll have a glass together. John brews sack rarely, and spareth not the eggs."

"Boh yo'n be at th' dauncing at th' Abbey, squoire," said one of the farmers.

"Curse the dancing!" cried Nicholas, "I hope the parson didn't hear me," he added, turning round quickly. "Well, well, I'll come down when the dancing's over, and we'll make a night of it." And he ran on to overtake Richard Assheton.

By this time the respective parties from the Abbey and the Vicarage having united, they walked on together, Sir Ralph Assheton, after courteously exchanging salutations with Dr. Ormerod's guests, still keeping a

little in advance of the company. Sir Thomas Metcalfe comported himself with more than his wonted haughtiness, and bowed so superciliously to Mistress Robinson that her two sons glanced angrily at each other, as if in doubt whether they should not instantly resent the affront. Observing this, as well as what had previously taken place, Nicholas Assheton stepped quickly up to them, and said,

“Keep quiet, lads. Leave this dunghill cock to me, and I’ll lower his crest.”

With this he pushed forward, and elbowing Sir Thomas rudely out of the way, turned round, and instead of apologising, eyed him coolly and contemptuously from head to foot.

“Are you drunk, sir, that you forget your manners?” asked Sir Thomas, laying his hand upon his sword.

“Not so drunk but that I know how to conduct myself like a gentleman, Sir Thomas,” rejoined Nicholas, “which is more than can be said for a certain person of my acquaintance, who, for aught I know, has only taken his morning pint.”

“You wish to pick a quarrel with me, Master Nicholas Assheton, I perceive,” said Sir Thomas, stepping close up to him, “and I will not disappoint you. You shall render me good reason for this affront before I leave Whalley.”

“When and where you please, Sir Thomas,” rejoined Nicholas, laughing. “At any hour, and at any weapon, I am your man.”

At that moment, Master Potts, who had scented a quarrel afar, and who would have liked it well enough if its prosecution had not run counter to his own interests, quitted Roger Nowell, and ran back to Metcalfe, and plucking him by the sleeve, said, in a low voice,

“This is not the way to obtain quiet possession of Raydale House, Sir Thomas. Master Nicholas Assheton,” he added, turning to him, “I must entreat you, my good sir, to be moderate. Gentlemen, both, I caution you that I have my eye upon you. You well know there is a magistrate here, my singular good friend and honoured client, Master Roger Nowell, and if you pursue this quarrel further, I shall hold it my duty to have you bound over by that worthy gentleman in sufficient securities to keep the peace towards our sovereign lord the king and all his lieges, and particularly towards each other. You understand me, gentlemen?”

“Perfectly,” replied Nicholas. I drink at John Lawe’s to-night, Sir Thomas.”

So saying, he walked away. Metcalfe would have followed him, but was withheld by Potts.

“Let him go, Sir Thomas,” said the little man of law; “let him go. Once master of Raydale, you can do as you please. Leave the settlement of the matter to me. I’ll just whisper a word in Sir Ralph Assheton’s ear, and you’ll hear no more of it.”

“Fire and fury!” growled Sir Thomas. “I like not this mode of settling a quarrel; and unless this hot-headed, psalm-singing puritan apologises, I shall assuredly cut his throat.”

“Or he yours, good Sir Thomas,” rejoined Potts. “Better sit in Raydale Hall, than lie in the Abbey vaults.”

“Well, we’ll talk over the matter, Master Potts,” replied the knight.

“A nice morning’s work I’ve made of it,” mused Nicholas, as he walked along; “here I have a dance with a farmer’s pretty wife, a dis-

course with a parson, a drinking-bout with a couple of clowns, and a duello with a blustering knight on my hands. Quite enough, o' my conscience! but I must get through it the best way I can. And now, hey for the May-pole and the morris-dancers!"

Nicholas just got up in time to witness the presentation of the May Queen to Sir Ralph Assheton and his lady, and like every one else he was greatly struck by her extreme beauty and natural grace.

The little ceremony was thus conducted. When the company from the Abbey drew near the troop of revellers, the usher taking Alizon's hand in the tips of his fingers as before, strutted forward with her to Sir Ralph and his lady, and falling upon one knee before them, said—"Most worshipful and honoured knight, and you his lovely daine, and you the tender and cherished olive branches growing round about their tabs, I humbly crave your gracious permission to present unto your honours our chosen Queen of May."

Somewhat fluttered by the presentation, Alizon yet maintained sufficient composure to bend gracefully before Lady Assheton, and say in a very sweet voice, "I fear your ladyship will think the choice of the village hath fallen ill in alighting upon me; and, indeed, I feel myself altogether unworthy the distinction; nevertheless I will endeavour to discharge my office fittingly, and therefore pray you, fair lady, and the worshipful knight, your husband, together with your beauteous children, and the gentles all by whom you are surrounded, to grace our little festival with your presence, hoping you may find as much pleasure in the sight as we shall do in offering it to you."

"A fair maid, and modest as she is fair," observed Sir Ralph, with a condescending smile.

"In sooth is she," replied Lady Assheton, raising her kindly, and saying, as she did so,

"Nay, you must not kneel to us, sweet maid. You are Queen of May, and it is for us to show respect to you during your day of sovereignty. Your wishes are commands; and, in behalf of my husband, my children, and our guests, I answer, that we will gladly attend your revels on the green."

"Well said, dear Nell," observed Sir Ralph. "We should be churlish, indeed, were we to refuse the bidding of so lovely a queen."

"Nay, you have called the roses in earnest to her cheek, now, Sir Ralph," observed Lady Assheton, smiling. "Lead on, fair queen," she continued, "and tell your companions to begin their sports when they please. Only remember this, that we shall hope to see all your gay troop this evening, at the Abbey, to a merry dance."

"Where I will strive to find her majesty a suitable partner," added Sir Ralph. "Stay, she shall make her choice now, as a royal personage should; for you know, Nell, a queen ever chooseth her partner, whether it be for the throne or for the brawl. How say you, fair one? Shall it be either of our young cousins, Joe or Will Robinson, of Raydale? Or our cousin, who still thinketh himself young, Squire Nicholas, of Downham?"

"Ay, let it be me, I implore of you, fair queen," interposed Nicholas.

"He is engaged already," observed Richard Assheton, coming forward. "I heard him ask pretty Mistress Tetlow, the farmer's wife, to dance with him this evening at the Abbey."

A loud laugh from those around followed this piece of information, but Nicholas was in no wise disconcerted.

"Dick would have her choose him, and that is why he interferes with me," he observed. "How say you, fair queen! Shall it be our hopeful cousin? I will answer for him that he danceth the coranto and lavolta indifferently well."

On hearing Richard Assheton's voice, all the colour had forsaken Alizon's cheeks; but at this direct appeal to her by Nicholas it returned with additional force, and the change did not escape the quick eye of Lady Assheton.

"You perplex her, cousin Nicholas," she said.

"Not a whit, Eleonor," answered the squire; "but if she like not Dick Assheton, there is another Dick, Dick Sherburne, of Sladeburne; or our cousin Jack Braddyll; or, if she prefer an older and discreet r man, there is Father Greenacres, of Worsten, or Master Roger Nowell, of Read—plenty of choice."

"Nay, if I must choose a partner, it shall be a young one," said Alizon.

"Right, fair queen, right," cried Nicholas, laughing. "Ever choose a young man if you can. Who shall it be?"

"You have named him yourself, sir," replied Alizon, in a voice which she endeavoured to keep firm, but which, in spite of all her efforts, sounded tremulously—"Master Richard Assheton."

"Next to choosing me, you could not have chosen better," observed Nicholas, approvingly. "Dick, lad, I congratulate thee."

"I congratulate myself," replied the young man. "Fair queen," he added, advancing, "highly flattered am I by your choice, and shall so demean myself, I trust, as to prove myself worthy of it. Before I go I would beg a boon from you—that flower."

"This pink?" cried Alizon. "It is yours, fair sir."

Young Assheton took the flower and took the hand that offered it at the same time, and pressed the latter to his lips, while Lady Assheton, who had been made a little uneasy by Alizon's apparent emotion, and who with true feminine tact immediately detected its cause, called out—"Now forward—forward to the May-pole! We have interrupted the revel too long."

Upon this, the May Queen stepped blushingly back with the usher, who, with his white wand in hand, had stood bolt upright behind her, immensely delighted with the scene in which his pupil—for Alizon had been tutored by him for the occasion—had taken part. Sir Ralph then clapped his hands loudly, and at this signal the tabor and pipe struck up; the Fool and the Hobby-horse, who, though idle at the time, had indulged in a little quiet fun with the rustics, recommenced their gambols; the Morris-dancers their lively dance; and the whole train moved towards the May-pole, followed by the rush-cart, with all its bells jingling, and all its garlands waving.

As to Alizon, her brain was in a whirl, and her bosom heaved so quickly, that she thought she should faint. To think that the choice of a partner in the dance at the Abbey had been offered her, and that she should venture to choose Master Richard Assheton! She could scarcely credit her own temerity. And then to think that she should give him a flower, and, more than all, that he should kiss her hand in return for it! She

felt the tingling pressure of his lips upon her fingers still, and her little heart palpitated strangely.

As she approached the May-pole, and the troop again halted for a few minutes, she saw her brother James, holding little Jennet by the hand, standing in the front line to look at her.

"Oh, how I'm glad to see you here, Jennet!" she cried.

"An ey'm glad to see yo, Alizon," replied the little girl. "Jem has towd me whot a grand partner you're to ha' this e'en. And she added, with playful malice, "Who was wrong whon she said the queen could choose Master Richard—"

"Hush, Jennet, not a word more," interrupted Alizon, blushing.

"Oh! ey dunna mean to vex ye, ey'm sure," replied Jennet. "Ey've got a present for ye."

"A present for me, Jennet," cried Alizon, "what is it?"

"A beautiful white dove," replied the little girl.

"A white dove! Where did you get it? Let me see it," cried Alizon in a breath.

"Here it is," replied Jennet, opening her kirtle.

"A beautiful bird, indeed," cried Alizon. "Take care of it for me till I come home."

"Which winna be till late, ey fancy," rejoined Jennet, roguishly.

"Ah!" she added, uttering a cry.

The latter exclamation was occasioned by the sudden flight of the dove, which escaping from her hold, soared aloft. Jennet followed the course of its silver wings, as they cleaved the blue sky, and then all at once saw a large hawk, which apparently had been hovering about, swoop down upon it, and bear it off. Some white feathers fell down near the little girl, and she picked up one of them and put it in her breast.

"Poor bird!" exclaimed the May Queen.

"Eigh, poor bird!" echoed Jennet, tearfully. "Ah, ye dunna knoa aw, Alizon."

"Weel, there's neaw use whimpering abowt a duv," observed Jem, gruffly. "Ey'n bring ye another t' furst time ey go to Cown."

"There's nah another bird like that," sobbed the little girl. "Shoot that cruel hawk fo' me, Jem, win ye."

"How conney wench, whon it's flown away," he replied. "Boh ey'n rob a hawk's nest fo' ye if that'll do os weel."

"Yo dunna understand me, Jem," replied the child, sadly.

At this moment, the music, which had ceased while some arrangements were made, commenced a very lively tune, known as "Round about the May-pole," and Robin Hood taking the May Queen's hand, led her towards the pole, and placing her near it, the whole of her attendants took hands, while a second circle was formed by the morris-dancers, and both began to wheel rapidly round her, the music momently increasing in spirit and quickness. An irresistible desire to join in the measure seized some of the lads and lasses around and they likewise took hands, and presently a third, and still wider circle was formed, wheeling gaily round the other two. Other dances were formed here and there, and presently the whole green was in movement.

"If you come off heart-whole to-night, Dick, I shall be surprised," observed Nicholas, who with his young relative had approached as near the May-pole as the three rounds of dancers would allow them.

Richard Assheton made no reply, but glanced at the pink which he had placed in his doublet.

"Who is the May Queen?" inquired Sir Thomas Metcalfe, who had likewise drawn near, of a tall man holding a little girl by the hand.

"Alizon, dowter of Elizabeth Device, an Mey sister," replied James Device, gruffly.

"Humph!" muttered Sir Thomas, "she is a well-looking lass. And she dwells here—in Whalley, fellow?" he added.

"Ioo dwells i' Whalley," responded Jem, sullenly.

"I can easily find her abode," muttered the knight, walking away.

"What was it Sir Thomas said to you, Jem?" inquired Nicholas, who had watched the knight's gestures, coming up.

Jem related what had passed between them.

"What the devil does he want with her?" cried Nicholas. "No good I'm sure. But I'll spoil his sport."

"Say boh t' word, squoire, an ey'n break every boan i' his body," remarked Jem.

"No, no, Jem," replied Nicholas. "Take care of your pretty sister, and I'll take care of him."

At this juncture, Sir Thomas, who, in spite of the efforts of the pacific Master Potts to tranquillise him, had been burning with wrath at the affront he had received from Nicholas, came up to Richard Assheton, and noticing the pink in his bosom, snatched it away suddenly.

"I want a flower," he said, smiling at it.

"Instantly restore it, Sir Thomas!" cried Richard Assheton, pale with rage, "or ——"

"What will you do, young sir?" rejoined the knight, tauntingly, and plucking the flower in pieces. "You can get another from the fair nymph who gave you this."

Further speech was not allowed the knight, for he received a violent blow on the chest from the hand of Richard Assheton, which sent him reeling backwards, and would have felled him to the ground if he had not been caught by some of the bystanders. The moment he recovered, Sir Thomas drew his sword, and furiously assaulted young Assheton, who stood ready for him, and after the exchange of a few passes, for none of the bystanders dared to interfere, sent his sword whirling over their heads through the air.

"Bravo, Dick," cried Nicholas, stepping up, and clapping his cousin on the back, "you have read him a good lesson, and taught him that he cannot always insult folks with impunity, ha! ha!" And he laughed loudly at the discomfited knight.

"He is an insolent coward," said Richard Assheton. "Give him his sword, and let him come on again."

"No, no," said Nicholas, "he has had enough this time. And if he has not, he must settle an account with me. Put up your blade, lad."

"I'll be revenged upon you both," said Sir Thomas, taking his sword, which had been brought him by a bystander, and stalking away.

"You leave us in mortal dread, doughty knight," cried Nicholas, shouting after him, derisively, "ha! ha! ha!"

Richard Assheton's attention was, however, turned in a different direction, for the music suddenly ceasing, and the dancers stopping, he learnt that the May Queen had fainted, and presently afterwards the crowd opened to give passage to Robin Hood, who bore her inanimate form in his arms.

THE MAN IN BLACK.

BY CORNELIUS COLVILLE.

THERE are no enjoyments like those of childhood—there are none so deeply regretted, so often looked back to, and so fondly remembered. They are peculiar to a period of life when the imagination is vivid—the heart alive to the warmest emotions. The season is one of gladness and mirth; its atmosphere is tinted with the *couleur de rose*; it presents a thousand ever-varying beauties to the eye, and a rapid succession of pleasing novelties to the mind: beneath its genial influence the heart throbs in a tumult of joy and expectation. Each toy is a treasure we would not exchange for all the wealth in the world; each little design more important than all the affairs of the universe put together. Who does not remember his first hoop—who cannot recall the delight occasioned by Aunt Jane's present of the interesting little book with the coloured pictures? Who does not remember the swing—the brook—the orchard—the green—that have administered to his juvenile amusements? Finally, who does not remember the impression made by the first tale he ever listened to? Childhood is particularly a time of credulity and superstition. It is then that every hill, every glade, is the abode of fairies; every house, not occupied by persons in the flesh, the tenement of peripatetic apparitions. The imagination is for ever dwelling upon castles of enchantment, and beautiful princesses immured therein, and subject to the power of some cruel and detestable demon. The most implicit belief is attached to palaces of gold, whose floors were paved with silver, and whose appointments consisted in a great measure of costly diamonds and other precious stones. Impregnable castles, dark and melancholy dungeons, to which inexorable and carnivorous giants consigned their innocent and helpless captives, present themselves to our fancy with all the minute and fearful details of reality. Now our sympathy, now our indiguation is aroused; for a moment we tremble with suspense, awaiting with the most feverish anxiety the issue of an adventure, upon which depends the happiness, the honour, the life, of some beautiful princess, endowed with more than human virtues and accomplishments. If the issue be favourable, our joy can only be equalled by that of the lady herself at her deliverance; if, on the contrary, it be unfavourable, we weep and lament the fate of one whose rare virtues entitled her to a less cruel and hapless destiny. As the truth of what is related is never for a moment questioned, our sorrow for the unfortunate heroes and heroines is not to be alleviated any more than our joy is to be diminished at the successes and prosperity to which they may attain. "Jack the Giant Killer" to us is an undoubted personage of history, and a very important one too. His valour, his achievements, have handed down his name with honour from one generation to another. His coat of darkness, his shoes of swiftness, are all matters of history, and are no more to be disputed than that the moon is inhabited by a man, who was placed there for having desecrated the Sabbath by gathering sticks on a Sunday—a fact, I think, pretty universally acknowledged by little nursery people in general.

There is no season so favourable for the enjoyment of fiction; we regard with no hypercritical or scrutinising eye the arrangement or

development of the plot: so long as it be interesting we heed not how inartistically, or with what appearance of improbability it may have been constructed. Unsophisticated, and without experience, we implicitly believe—our confidence is easily obtained. Dazzled by the entertainment spread before us, we have not yet been taught to doubt the substantial nature of the repast.

I have been led into these rambling reflections by the following narrative, which is associated with the period of life to which I have referred. It is one I have listened to a score of times with the closest attention; it is one which never recurs to me but conjures up to my mind the personal appearance of him who has been some years in his grave, whose memory I shall ever revere, and whose kindness and affection towards myself, shall never be forgotten.—*Requiescat in pace.*

My grandfather was in the habit of commencing the narrative thus:

It is now thirty years since the large stone mansion, which stands to the left of Marley Hill, was built. It presented a very different appearance at that time from what it does now. Since that period it has been enlarged; the grounds surrounding the house have been much improved, and the fine large trees which you now behold had only then been planted. The gentleman who built the house was a very singular character, and had suddenly come into the possession of immense wealth. He was a person of a very limited education, and his personal appearance was singular in the extreme. I remember him now as distinctly as if the occurrence I am about to relate was only of yesterday's date. He was below the middle height, and the rotundity of his person arrested the attention at once. I shall give you a pretty correct notion of his appearance when I state, that if a barber's block with a low crowned hat upon it, were placed upon a small barrel elevated upon a couple of sticks, two or three feet in length, and a cloak were thrown around it, the *tout ensemble* would be no mean resemblance to the person of old Jacob Gripley. His face was not a whit less remarkable. It was so red that it almost made you blush to look at it. He had an enormous nose, well ornamented with carbuncles, and his eyes were small, greyish, and cat-like. A great number of strange stories were circulated respecting Gripley, and some doubts were entertained as to whether he had come honestly by his money. It was even insinuated that a certain connexion subsisted between himself and an old gentleman of long standing and considerable antiquity, whom I need not describe more particularly. What grounds there were for such an hypothesis I know not, unless, indeed, it were the unaccountable way in which he appeared to have come into possession of his money. He had never been married, and always entertained a strong antipathy to the married state. His mansion was considered an open house for all his friends, and Gripley was frequently honoured with their company. There was a plentiful supply of good cheer on such occasions, which was always freely distributed amongst the guests. The squire (it was so that Griply was styled) was looked up to by the people in the surrounding neighbourhood with considerable deference. His wealth and his generosity had obtained for him many ardent admirers. Still mysterious insinuations were thrown out, and nods and winks were exchanged, all of which appeared to indicate that Jacob Gripley was not exactly *comme il faut*.

It was the custom of Gripley, during the winter evenings, to entertain at his house three or four of his most familiar friends. On these social evenings, an abundance of everything was provided; but, perhaps, there

was no article so much in request as tobacco. Jacob Gripley was a great smoker; his friends were great smokers; his servants, his tenants, his tradesmen, *cum multis aliis*, with whom he had dealings, were great smokers. It could not be otherwise. Gripley had no sympathy with a man who could not smoke his pipe; there was something radically wrong, he considered, in an individual who was unable to appreciate the enjoyment afforded by that exquisite sedative. Hence, any man that loved tobacco, Gripley loved, and *vice versa*. Charles Lamb and he would not have quarrelled upon that point.

I was not one of Jacob Gripley's intimate friends, but I was, nevertheless, a congenial spirit. I loved my pipe. It happened one night I had occasion to call at his house. It was in November. The day had been very stormy, and a great quantity of snow had fallen. It was several feet deep in the country, and it was impossible for any conveyance to travel. When my name had been announced, Mr. Gripley came to the door to invite me in. I requested him to excuse me as I had promised my family to return early. He would not hear of any apologies, and I was obliged to yield to his solicitations. I was ushered into a large room with a stone floor, and which was commonly used as a place for general culinary purposes. There was a fine large fire blazing at the further end of the room, and round the hearth were placed half a dozen large oaken chairs, in three of which were deposited some of the intimate friends of Jacob Gripley. The kitchen was furnished in the ordinary way; on one side stood a dresser, upon which was placed a delf-rack filled with all kinds of crockery-ware. The walls of the room were hung round with the usual kitchen utensils, which were uncommonly bright and clean, and a credit to any housewife. Opposite the dresser stood a large deal table as white as snow. In the centre of the apartment was placed a small round table, on which stood a number of bottles, glasses, and jugs, which were appropriated to the use of the company assembled.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Gripley, introducing me, "this is Mr. Pennypinn. I need not say he possesses those qualities which entitle him to admission to our society."

"How do you do, Mr. Pennypinn? Glad to see you," said a little man with a red face, puffed shirt, and buff waistcoat.

"Permit me, sir," said a corpulent man in a brown wig, and placing three great fat fingers, like overgrown carrots, into my hand.

"As a smoker, sir, you have at once a passport to our society," said the third man, who was very tall, and marked with the small-pox. "Allow me to say that I shall have no objection to cultivate your acquaintance." And he sank back in his chair with the air of a man who had made a very condescending admission.

I was a good deal struck with the formality with which my introduction had been accomplished. I had now time to look around me. I observed that each gentleman held in his hand an enormous pipe, from the tube of which large volumes of smoke were inhaled and again discharged from the mouth of the smoker. The utmost gravity prevailed, and not a word fell from the lips of any of the party. They were too much absorbed with their occupation. The curling wreaths of smoke appeared to have suggested certain trains of thought which had imposed the most impressive silence upon every one present. Their loquacious propensities were checked. The soothing weed seemed, like oil thrown upon the turbulent waters, to have hushed every emotion, and to have

spread a pleasing tranquillity over their whole demeanour. Life seemed to them of no moment; gaiety and boisterous enjoyment were accounted of little value; the power of speech and the intercommunication of ideas possessed little consideration in their esteem; the passions by which other men were actuated they had never experienced. They had but one object, one enjoyment, one occupation. They had formed but one attachment, to which they had steadily adhered through every vicissitude of fortune, and the pipe claimed their undivided affection.

These were the men that my partial predilection for tobacco had introduced me to; these were the men into whose society I had the happiness to be admitted.

I had sat some minutes observing Mr. Gripeley and his friends, without venturing to make a remark. There was evidently no disposition for conversation. Mr. Gripeley perceived my uneasiness, and, walking to a cupboard a short distance from him, he drew therefrom a long clay pipe, which, without saying a word, he placed in my hand, the man who sat next me at the same time handing me a large leaden jar, in which was deposited a plentiful supply of tobacco. I perfectly understood this pantomimic performance, and therefore filled and lighted my pipe in silence.

Half an hour had elapsed, and no one had spoken. At length the man with the red face and buff waistcoat disturbed the monotony.

"It is now five years," he said, in an undertone, and almost unconsciously.

"I beg your pardon, sir," I said, "to what do you refer?"

"Yes, five years have passed away," he repeated, without taking any notice of my inquiry, "since he was amongst us. Truly he was a great smoker!"

I conceived I should be intruding if I pushed my curiosity any further, so I remained silent.

"Mr. Gripeley," he said aloud, "you have not forgot that occasion?"

The person addressed was unconscious that his guest had spoken.

"Gripeley!" he cried, in a louder tone of voice.

"Sir," responded that gentleman, with alacrity.

"Have you forgot the night when that remarkable man was amongst us?"

"What night?—what man?"

"The night of the 25th of January, 1787."

"What man?" repeated Mr. Gripeley.

"THE MAN IN BLACK," answered the little man, in a solemn and emphatic manner.

These words conveyed a species of electric shock to every person present. Until that moment the whole party, with the exception of Jacob Gripeley and the man in the buff waistcoat, had been as silent as the grave. The quietness that had prevailed was oppressive. A mouse might have been heard to cross the floor, a pin to fall, so still, so absorbed in reflection, were, with the exceptions named, the gentlemen assembled. Not less surprising, not less curious, was the change produced by the utterance of these words than that effected in the castle of the Sleeping Beauty, when, after a long sleep of I know not how many hundred years, she and her whole household were in a moment restored to consciousness and activity. The words, simple as they were, produced a magical effect. To me they indicated nothing; to me they were as a sealed

book. What could they imply? What was the nature of that incomprehensible mystery which seemed to be attached to them? They were but words—ordinary words. They described the colour of a man's garments; there their utility ended. **THE MAN IN BLACK!** Gracious Heavens! what portentous meaning could four such insignificant words indicate? Was there anything remarkable in the colour? Was there anything unusual in persons being clad in "customary suits of solemn black?" On the contrary, they were the most becoming. Heavens! nine persons out of every ten wore them in the most civilised countries in the world. Had it been the **Man in White**, the matter would have been different. It might have been expected to excite surprise; it might have been expected to raise human curiosity to the highest pitch.

There are seasons when things of a comparatively insignificant nature will produce effects by no means in proportion with the means applied. A tone, a look, a gesture, may recall with painful accuracy certain periods of existence over which the mantle of oblivion might well be thrown. A strain of music, a flower, a landscape, may suddenly reveal to the mental eye "some bright spot on memory's waste" on which we love to dwell. It may be connected with our childhood, or, peradventure, with our maturer years. It may be associated with that period which occurs to most of people once in their lives, which has no counterpart in anything that went before, or in anything that comes after—that period when the flowers seemed to possess a richer perfume, their leaves a brighter hue; when the sky appeared to wear a softer, warmer tint; when Nature, indeed, wore her loveliest and most captivating aspect, and when the rich swell of music held in thrall the rapt and listening ear. Our impressions do not so much depend upon the objects upon which we gaze, as upon the lens through which they are exhibited to us. It was not that the sky was brighter; it was not that the flowers were fairer; it was not that the music was sweeter. It was the heart which, having for the first time become susceptible to the influence of love, coloured the objects around, and gave to each a hue transient and reflected.

I must apologise for this digression; but as a pedestrian in the course of his peregrinations, stumbling over a stone, sometimes stoops to examine it with eager curiosity, so the relater of a story may let slip an observation which may at once suggest a different train of thought from that which previously occupied his mind, and thus for a moment retard the progress of his narrative.

The words uttered by the gentleman in the buff waistcoat struck a chord in memory which seemed to recall to the minds of the gentlemen present some event of their past lives of the greatest importance. Their pipes fell from their mouths, and lay broken into a thousand atoms upon the floor; they silently stared at each other in the greatest consternation, and a clammy sweat became visible upon their bald foreheads.

"What said you?" at length inquired Jacob Gripeley, his eyes flashing indignation.

"I mentioned **THE MAN IN BLACK**," replied the short gentleman, calmly.

"**THE MAN IN BLACK!**" echoed the corpulent gentleman, in the brown wig.

"Merciful Heaven! **THE MAN IN BLACK!**" exclaimed the tall man.

"I need not repeat my words, gentlemen," said the red-faced man, quite unmoved.

"The harmony of this company has been disturbed," said the stout gentleman.

"Mr. Tweedlethumb," said Jacob Gribley, "I'm sorry for this act of indiscretion; let it be forgotten. Gentlemen, here are plenty of pipes; I beseech you to make use of them."

The invitation was immediately accepted, and the usual silence again prevailed. I was a silent observer of these extraordinary proceedings, and though I felt the greatest curiosity to know who **THE MAN IN BLACK** was, and why the mention of him should produce so great a sensation, I was constrained to remain in total ignorance as to his character.

A considerable time passed away, and the silence remained unbroken. The fire was now beginning to burn less brightly; the light from the candles grew dim and feeble; and the whole place appeared less cheerful than before. Nothing was heard, save an occasional cricket upon the hearth, to disturb the deathlike stillness that prevailed. A mighty change suddenly came over the spirit of the entire company. They seemed spell-bound—their limbs were rigid—they were unable to move. Their eyes stared wildly, and the hair upon their heads stood erect. Their gaze was directed to one place—it was fixed upon one object. I turned my own towards it. I was appalled—I was scarcely able to breathe, and quite incapable of giving utterance to the agonising feelings by which I was oppressed. I observed that a chair, which during the evening had been empty, was now filled! It was occupied by a man in a black suit. He held a long, curiously-shaped pipe in his hand, from which he drew vast clouds of smoke. A low murmur at length ran through the company, and I fancied I heard these words, in an under tone, pass from one to another—

"THE MAN IN BLACK!"

I could not raise my eyes from this extraordinary phenomenon; and for a few minutes was incapable of the least locomotion. The cause of this alarm was either indifferent or insensible to the terror he had inspired. He was fixed as a statue—cold as the sculptured marble. His pipe was never once removed from his mouth, and he continued to draw from its long and spiral tube immense volumes of smoke, which floated and wreathed above his head, forming all kinds of odd combinations. I watched him with the most intense anxiety. I expected he would speak—change his position. I was mistaken. His limbs appeared to be inflexible. I was only conscious that he was alive by the vapour which he perpetually emitted from his mouth. I strove to catch a glimpse of his countenance, but I was unsuccessful; the dense smoke effectually concealed it from my view. I bethought me of his profile; the smoke was in front of him rather than around. I changed my position; I seated myself on his right hand, though at a suitable distance. He remained in the same attitude, and, apparently, without any effort on his part;—the vapour floated round to the side on which I sat, and completely defeated the object I had in view. I crossed to the other side, but the screen was as effectual as before. My curiosity was raised to the highest pitch. Who—what was this man, that he should thus wish to conceal his features? Was he a man? I now began to comprehend the terror which had been produced by the short gentleman in the buff waistcoat by the mention of **THE MAN IN**

BLACK! This was **THE MAN IN BLACK!**—this was he, without question. His sombre garments—his capacity as a smoker—the surprise and alarm of the company—all seemed to strengthen the hypothesis. What was his object in intruding upon the company? His society was not desirable; he was not sociable; he was not, apparently, a friend of Mr. Gribley; he was not invited; and, notwithstanding his proficiency as a smoker, he was evidently not respected by any member of the company. Other reflections instantly suggested themselves. How had he gained ingress to the mansion? The hall-door, I had understood, was already barred and locked. How had he been able to enter the room and deposit himself in the chair, without having been observed? These questions were difficult to answer: it was sufficient, the man was there. He had come there mysteriously; nobody knew when—nobody knew how!

For a moment, I raised my eyes from the object on which they had so long been fixed, and I discovered that the other gentlemen had gone. "I was solitary and miserable. I alone was left to *his* society—I alone was made the companion of—whom? **THE MAN IN BLACK.** I was convinced that it was he—nay, it could be no other. For hours and hours my eyes were intently riveted upon him. I made myself sure that some change would take place in his attitude, which would clear up the mystery with which he was surrounded. It was not so. To my great surprise, he continued to smoke with unabated vehemence, and, strange to say, his pipe never required replenishing. The bowl seemed to be inexhaustible, and to be stored with a supply which experienced no diminution. The tube was twisted in the most singular manner, and which I could not help regarding with great curiosity. Whilst my eyes were carefully scrutinising it, my attention was suddenly attracted to the bowl. I imagined it underwent a change, which, however, was momentary. I fancied a small transparent spot became visible in the centre, but which almost immediately disappeared. I watched it more closely, but I observed nothing further. I kept my eyes, however, fixed upon it, and at length the pipe displayed the same singular phenomenon, but on a much larger scale, and which in this instance was not evanescent. The bowl of the pipe, which was somewhat large, grew quite red, and the glow which proceeded from it in some measure illuminated the room, which had for some time been in almost total darkness, the candles having long since expired and the fire in the grate throwing little light into the chamber. The fire by which the bowl was illuminated enabled me to see it with more distinctness than I had as yet had an opportunity of doing. It was of an oval formation, somewhat resembling the shape of those old-fashioned mirrors, which are now regarded as valuable relics of antiquity. The heat within grew more and more intense, and at last it became brilliantly transparent. The silence that prevailed was unbearable. I was almost choked, and the perspiration treasured from my face. The man smoked without intermission; the smoke as it ascended twisted itself into the most grotesque and ludicrous shapes. Oh! that the tick-ticking of some clock, or the sound of some blacksmith's forge could have been heard to break the awful silence that reigned around—a silence more fearful than the grave—a silence of which that of the chamber of death is but a faint and imperfect resemblance.

There was something singular about this pipe. Its shape was different from any I had as yet seen, and the bowl considerably larger. The vapour which was discharged from the man's mouth now arrested my attention. It did not ascend in the precise manner in which it had

previously done, but appeared to be endowed with the power of assuming the most fantastic and hideous combinations. Now it seemed like heavy masses of dark clouds, driven rapidly athwart the sky by a violent wind; now it assumed the appearance of a serpent, and coiled and wriggled itself into the most horrible contortions; anon it wore the appearance of a demon, whose head and body were encircled by myriads of scorpions. To my horror and consternation, the objects multiplied. Thousands and thousands of serpents, demons, and scorpions filled the air, and disported themselves around the head of the man, who remained as silent and as indifferent as ever. Shocked by the horrors by which I was encompassed, my eyes again sought the bowl of the pipe. My nerves were again put to the severest test. The most frightful countenance I had ever beheld was suddenly exhibited upon it. It was haggard and care-worn—the cheek bones greatly projected—the eyes were sunken and dull—the skin pinched, yellow, and unwholesome. The expression of the countenance denoted suffering and despair. The lineaments at last gradually softened and assumed a somewhat mild and placid appearance, and slowly and almost imperceptibly disappeared from the pipe. The face was immediately replaced by another of a different character altogether. It was stout and well-conditioned, but the teeth were ground together and the lips closely compressed. The eyes shot forth flames of fire, and the expression of the face indicated rage and disappointment. The ferocity of the countenance, however, gradually relaxed as it slowly vanished from my sight. A third now presented itself. It was sad and melancholy; the eyes were dull and inflamed, and its appearance indicative of mental agony. In a similar manner to the preceding ones, its aspect became more composed before it faded from my view.

I could endure these sights no longer. I called aloud in my agony, and was determined to make an effort for my deliverance.

“What means this?” I demanded. “Speak—say, who are you?”

A hollow, sepulchral voice thus made answer :

“I am the minister and the vindicator of the tobacco plant—of that plant which is so highly valued and so much sought after by all races of mankind, and which has been one of the greatest boons to the whole human family—of that plant which possesses the power to calm the angry passions of men—soothe them under every distress, and reconcile them to the evils and discomforts which they are called upon to encounter in the course of their pilgrimage to a better land. I have already endeavoured to illustrate its virtues. The faces which you have seen cross the bowl of the pipe have been exhibited to you with this intention. The first countenance is symbolical of poverty—the second of anger—the third of grief and mental affliction. You will have observed, as each of these evils has been subjected to the influence of the tobacco, how the expression of the face has mollified—its features relaxed, and how, before it finally disappeared from the pipe, it has put on an air of comparative resignation.”

Delighted with this explanation, and grateful for the friendly manner in which it was given, I bent forward to shake hands with this benevolent man. In so doing I fell from my chair, and discovered that it was day. I had been dreaming.

Whenever I smoke a pipe this vision recurs to me, and my imagination is so vivid, that I frequently fancy I behold, in the empty chair opposite me, this identical MAN IN BLACK.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

BEING THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR,
PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

BY JOSEPH ANTHONY, JUN.

Dacre.—How strange the chance
That unexpected thee should hither bring,
On this eventful night.

THE OUTLAW.

SOME years ago, on a raw and gusty evening, in the month of September, I drove up to a roadside inn, which, at that time, rejoicing under the name of the Flying Childers, to all travellers journeying between — and Bury St. Edmund's, professed to afford good accommodation. A more unpromising and uninviting exterior than the said Flying Childers presented, considering the size of the building, I have rarely looked upon. To those not thoroughly acquainted with the geography of the locality, it would appear at first sight to have been built with the view alone of securing, as a half-way house, the custom of travellers—by no means inconsiderable in number—journeying between the two towns. A nearer inspection, however—for the Flying Childers lay some hundred yards or more off the public road—would show that there was every indication of a nest of supporters lying in the hollow behind, the tower of a church at no great distance, and a faint canopy of smoke hanging over the trees which stood around it, indicating pretty plainly that the said inn was in a very favourable position to command the support of those who vegetated in the village, as well as those who journeyed on the highway.

I have already observed that its exterior was anything but prepossessing; I might add, that the interior was fully in unison. This I knew from having frequently pulled up for the purpose of giving my Rosinante a feed, and myself a glass of their best home-brewed, which, to say the least on't, was a very prime article, and of a verity in that part of the world a rarity; for wretched is the stuff generally vended under the cognomen of ale in the counties of Cambridge and Suffolk. I say that the interior of the Flying Childers was such as you would be prepared to find from its outward appearance, and had it not been when I was within half a mile of the inn that my horse, through overwork, gave indications of distress, and the night coming rapidly on, I should never have dreamt of seeking within its walls accommodation for the night. Indeed, such was my disinclination, that on my nag first showing symptoms of giving in, I enterained the thought of walking him the next ten miles, rather than trust myself to such haphazard comfort as I might find at the said inn, and my resolution so to do was duly changed by the reflection that my Rosinante had, during the past week, been somewhat overtired, and that to proceed farther would be downright injustice to his noble nature, and the faithfulness of his services during the many years I had called him mine.

Convinced on this point, and feeling assured from my former observations when calling at the house, that although their accommodation for bipeds was of an inferior and limited character, their stabling was excellent, with, as I at the moment imagined, a stoical indifference to my own

creature comforts, I drove up, as I have said, on a gusty September evening, to the door of this very unpromising-looking inn. I felt fully satisfied that my tired beast would fall into good hands; for in allusion to the ostler who officiated as horsekeeper to the *Brilliant*, which changed at the Flying Childers, I h'rd heard Joliffe, who worked that once fast four, declare "old Sam could turn out *hosses* with any man in England." The secret of this was, that old Sam had his hobby like everybody else; and Sam's hobby was his love of horses. He was fond of, and took a pride in what he had to do for them. His whole world was bound in by horseflesh. He had no ideas beyond the stable and the coach; and probably no class of men were ever looked upon with more deadly dislike than the various troops of railway surveyors and their staffs, who were making their appearance in Sam's locality when I last saw him. Yes, Sam was indeed a connoisseur in horses. I have seen him walk round his cattle after they were harnessed to the *Brilliant*; and whilst Joliffe was engaged in the interior, on that business common to all coachmen pulling up at inns, he would inspect the team with the most scrupulous attention; if a single hair were turned, smoothing it carefully down, then stepping slowly backwards to contemplate with marvellous complacency the subjects of his care and pride.

But Joliffe drove good cattle, very different to those we see now-a-days, pairs and unicorns attached to coaches, which, under the names of *Meteor*, *Wonder*, *Everlasting*, &c., carry such striking satires on themselves.

To return to the Flying Childers.

My host had no fire lighted in his best sitting-room, as he was pleased to term it, when I entered, so, after seeing a bedroom, which was a tolerable place, I amused myself by watching Sam's operations on my steed, and engaged him in an amusing colloquy on his favourite subject, until I was informed the room was ready.

The room—the best room! Picture to yourself, reader, with the prospect of a long winter's evening before you, a rather spacious apartment with bare walls, its floor scarcely covered by a scatty, and in some parts dilapidated, carpet, a table covered by a cloth which had evidently once borne a pattern, but which was so stained and defaced by sundry visitations of various liquors, that you might as well have searched to find the original colour of the cloth, as the device which it once had borne. There was certainly a good fire, and the mantel-piece displayed a number of what in my hostess's eye were, doubtless, ornaments, consisting of diminutive wax figures in little dirty glass cases; the same questionable taste that had so installed them had, no doubt, also presided over the bestowal of a border of bright yellow paint, which, on a black oak ground, circled a rather antique mirror, adorning the wall over the fire-place. Books, I had none with me; what was I to do to kill the hours until bedtime? A dirty-looking volume lying on a sideboard, as it met my gaze, for the moment elated me with the hope that it might prove something curiously rare—a fall of manna in the wilderness. Alas! it was but an old battered "Directory," and on examining it I found, as a matter of course, that it was deficient of those pages which had once graced it, containing the names of the natives and general statistics of the parish in which I was sojourning, and which I will here call *Sandy Hollow*.

It would be no easy task to learn the true motive which instigates this

stupid piece of mischief so generally practised; certain it is, that three-fourths of the "Directories" to be found at inns are despoiled of those pages relating to their own locality, or, if not torn from the book, are so defaced as to be scarcely legible. The once useful compilation belonging to the Flying Childers formed, as I have *observed*, no exception to the rule; there was, indeed, a full, true, and particular account of the whole county, save and except the identical part once devoted to the place of my sojourn.

The last page of the mutilated work now appeared where the topographical and statistical information relative to the place in which the Flying Childers was situated had once commenced. Here, some one, probably a casual sojourner like myself, had scribbled *memoriae sacrum* of Sandy Hollow.

Somewhat annoyed, I threw down the book, for it had occurred to me, whilst cogitating how I should contrive to despatch the time until it should be a fitting hour to seek an interview with Mr. Morpheus, that a Captain B——, the father of an old schoolfellow of mine, had chosen the *locale* for his residence, some years past, when my intimacy with his son terminated by the latter going abroad. I expected to have found his name in the Directory, and, in consulting it for that purpose, felt half-inclined, should his residence be within a tolerable distance, to pay him a visit.

"It was certainly a long time ago," I ruminated, whilst gazing in the fire and sipping a mixture of something which I tried to persuade myself was sherry negus, such as I had ordered—"a long time ago since I had seen my friend's father;" but my recollections were such as induced me strongly to entertain the idea of calling on him, rather than pass the evening in so cheerless and dreary a place as the best room of this highway inn. When we were lads together, I had been a frequent guest at my friend Frank's home, and with what interest did I now recal the young, fast-fleeting days that I had passed under his father's hospitable roof! How sweet are reveries of the past! how sweet to pause at times amidst the whirl and harlyburly of every-day life, with all its stern realities, and, winging fancy to by-gone hours, live them with all their sunshine o'er again; beholding forms undying in memory; and listening to voices whose melody, alas! is hushed for ever. Thus, in the eloquent language of Wilson, "may one moment minister to years, and the life-wearied heart of old age, by one delightful remembrance, be restored to primal joy; the glory of the past brought beamingly upon the faded present, and the world that is obscurely passing away from our eyes re-illumined with the visions of its early morn."

Since the days on which I so fondly dwelt in my reverie, the captain had married a second wife, changed his residence, and Frank, the first friend of my heart, had been wrecked and lost on his passage out to India. It was so long ago, I reflected; the chances are that the captain has forgotten me. How unpleasant, too, to go through the ordeal of self-introduction, whilst there existed even a possibility of not being welcome; nay, more, it flashed across my memory I had somewhere heard the captain's last wife was a bit of a termagant, and, indeed, had been the cause of poor Frank's going abroad. And this remembrance was almost decisive. "I'll stay where I am," mentally I exclaimed; drawing my chair closer to the fire, and endeavouring to feel quite satisfied that second

thoughts are always the best. It took, however, some little time, after hearing argument on both sides, to come to this decision. On the one hand, there was a cheerless room, no company, no books, miserable fare, perchance, if I ventured to order supper ; and, withal, the melancholy night-wind fitfully wailing round the building, and at times shaking the old shutters with a rattle that made my heart leap within me : on the other hand, there was the chance of enjoying the captain's society, his comfortable drawing-room, reminiscences of dear old times, his pictures, and his port.

On coming to the conclusion to remain where I was, I again reviewed my position in the Flying Childers, and vigorously tried to persuade myself that the quarters were not so bad. My host had, perhaps, a little library somewhere in the house, perchance amongst his collection some choice old black-lettered volume might reveal itself, and, cheered by the thought, I rang the bell, determined to order mental and physical refreshment together. My hostess, who answered the bell, was a tidy-looking little body, clean and countrified, and so truly unsophisticated in manner, as led me to infer that she had never extended her researches into the world beyond the knowledge of it afforded by the daily occurrences of Sandy Hollow and the Flying Childers.

As, of my two requirements, food for the mind was uppermost in my thoughts, when, in obedience to my summons, the hostess entered the room, it will not appear singular that my inquiry should be—

“Have you any books in the house?”

“Rooks, sir,” replied the landlady, with a look of amazement ; “rooks, sir?”

Innkeepers, be it observed, and waiters in general, have an impression on their craniums, as though it had been engraved there, that eating and drinking form the most important occupations in life, and are rarely prepared to reply to questions on other heads than the all-engrossing subject of victualling. Some years ago I was witness to an amusing illustration of this, in one of the large hotels in the north of England. The omnibus which runs from the railway-station had barely deposited its passengers at the door, when a tall, portly gentleman walked into the room where I was sitting, and after divesting himself of his travelling coat, and giving orders to Boots respecting his luggage, drew up a chair to the fire and rang the bell.

“Waiter,” said he, as that functionary entered the room, and speaking rather rapidly, but, to my tympanum, very distinctly, “waiter, what papers do you take in ?” adding, without stopping for a reply to his question, “if you have to-day's *Times*, let me see it directly.”

Waiters in large inns, as some of my readers may have noticed, often affect to be wonderfully alert, which is not unfrequently carried to an extreme.

“Yezur,” they often exclaim, before you have well given your instructions, affecting an aptitude and smartness in comprehending your wants, and vanishing when your drawing breath is perhaps but a breathing comma in the sentence you are delivering, bringing you to a full stop ere you have more than half expressed your wishes. “Yezur,” said the worthy in question, ere the portly traveller had ceased speaking, and was out of the room in a twinkling.

Ere the gentleman, however, had quite stretched out his legs at the

fire, the waiter returned, and advancing close up to him, thus delivered himself :

“Soup, ox-tail and mock-turtle; fish, salmon and sole; beef, roast and boiled; leveret, chicken; hashed—”

“Hashed be hanged!” roared out the infuriated traveller, starting up in a rage from his chair. “I asked you for the *Times* paper. Curse you, waiters, you can’t think it possible for a man to want anything but to be always stuffing and swilling. I want the *Times* paper, I tell you; curse your hash!”

“Rooks, sir!” exclaimed the presiding genius of the Flying Childers, with a look of amazement.

“No, you mistake me,” I replied, half laughing, the circumstance related occurring to me at the moment. “No, I said books—books to read. I shall also want some supper in an hour or so; pray what can you give me?” My hostess retired to consult the larder, and at the same time to search for any volume the house might contain.

“Yes, I am booked here for the night,” I mentally exclaimed, whilst applying the poker to the fire, making it blaze and sparkle quite cheerily over the room, producing an exhilarating though transient effect on my spirits. “The quarters are not so very bad, after all,” I thought; “the books that may turn up, the nice supper that they probably may give me. Ah! these country inns; did I not know how snugly they could do a bird occasionally?”

Alas! for my hopes, my hostess returned; they had no books at all in the place, and, with regard to supper, there was nothing left but cold mutton. Should she cook me some eggs and bacon? In utter despair, I ordered the latter to be ready in an hour, and after two or three turns across the room, sat down again to cogitate whether I should not, after all, seek out and venture on a visit to Captain B—. My hostess must have thought me a restless sort of being, for she had not long left me ere I again summoned her to my presence. The residence of the captain, it appeared, was not more than half-an-hour’s walk distant, lying to the left of the village. The landlady could give me no information relative to the members composing his family; indeed, she knew but very little about them, as they had come to reside there since she was married, which, she informed me, was the time when she had left the village for the Flying Childers.

Only half-an-hour’s walk! What though it was night, and the road unknown to me, I resolved upon going, and slipping on an overcoat, with a trusty blackthorn in my hand, I issued forth from the inn.

“Keep straight down the lane, sir,” said my hostess, who had accompanied me to the door to give me the required directions; “keep straight on till you come to the common, which you must leave to your right, and take the other road round by the mill, and it will take you, in about a quarter of a mile farther, to the house; you will see it among the trees. You had better let Sam go with you, s.:”

“No,” said I, “the distance is so short, and your directions so plain, I shall not need him. Should I not return in an hour, give Sam the eggs and bacon, and tell him to sit up for me until twelve; should I not return by that time, he need not wait longer, but go to bed.” So saying, and buttoning my coat closely round me, with a “Good night” to my hostess, I sallied forth from the Flying Childers.

It was, indeed, a dreary night, the wind had increased in violence, and was now howling furiously; dark masses of cloud were careering along the heavens, allowing a crescent moon, and a solitary star here and there, occasionally to peep forth, as though to reveal how rapid was their flight. The air, too, had become very chilly, and I began to congratulate myself in not having pushed on my jaded steed, now so comfortably housed, and myself with something of a prospect of getting into comfortable quarters. There was no difficulty in following the directions I had received, and within half-an-hour from the time of starting I found myself at the house. By the imperfect light afforded, the dwelling appeared to be one of those old-fashioned, gabled, irregular buildings which here and there are seen scattered over the country, mementos of olden times. It seemed nicely situated, well protected on three sides by a deep belt of trees, with a fine sweep of lawn in front, which, by the dimly-seen grouping of the shrubs, I judged to be tastefully ornamented.

With not a little pleasure I learned from the domestic who answered my summons at the door, that the captain was at home, and following the presentation of my card, I was immediately ushered into his presence.

I will not dwell on the first moments of my meeting with the father of my old schoolfellow; enough to say, that he well and right-gladly remembered me, that the associations which my presence called up brought more than one tear to his eye, and that his voice faltered, veteran as he was, as he grasped my hand in both of his hands whilst bidding me welcome.

There was no reserve about him. I had not sat ten minutes beside his hearth, ere he had communicated to me the leading events of his life since I had last seen him. The principal part I was already in possession of from other sources, and that was Frank's death. It appeared that some few months after the captain's second marriage, having had some words with his step-mother, and an appointment abroad offering itself at the time, my old schoolfellow resolved upon accepting it, his father in vain endeavouring to dissuade him. I have before related that, on his passage out, he met with his death. The captain showed me a letter which Frank had written to him on the day of his embarkation, replying to his father's last written appeal against his departure, in a tone of firm resolution and confidence, yet breathing withal, to him, the warmest affection throughout; I perceived by the crumpled and worn state of the paper, it was a dear memento, and that the captain had many a time and oft read it o'er and o'er again. My host had no family by his present wife, who, I learned, was on a visit with her relatives in the north of England, and that he purposed in a few days taking a trip himself to the same quarter to bring her home.

Desirous of dispelling the sadness which our reminiscences of the past had thrown around us, I led my host away from talking of his lost son, and not a little did I amuse him when describing my irresolution at the Flying Chilfers, and the complication of causes which led me in desperate resolve to seek him. He rallied me on my modesty, and ere we sat down to supper, so friendly had we become, that I had made a promise to spend a week with him in the following spring. I know not that I ever more readily accepted an invitation in my life, so cordial was the captain's manner, so much heart was there in all he said. Rapidly flew the time, the captain showing me all his curiosities, of which he was an enthusiastic collector, his pictures, and his books. More than once, whilst we were

thus occupied, my host regretted the absence of his man-servant, to whom it seemed he had given a couple of days' holiday to attend a sister's wedding in an adjoining county. He also showed me his favourite nag, and his stabling; and, after I had seen his fawn-and-white dog, which had recently borne off a coursing trophy, we returned to the house.

Being more snug, as he observed, than the drawing-room, my host now ushered me into his library, where a blazing fire, a goodly display of bottles and glasses, and a chess-board opened on the table, gave pretty clear indication that the captain had determined our companionship should not terminate very speedily. As I was a chess-player, and he passionately fond of the game, we had already arranged that I should give up all thoughts of returning to the Flying Childers, give my host battle, and take up my quarters for the night where I was.

After a round or two of the captain's port, to drink some old-fashioned toasts, and by way also, as my entertainer said, of preparing the palate for the true flavour of the next bottle, we sat down to the game.

The veteran, although much attached to chess, was not a first-rate player; we were about equally matched, our contest proving so interesting to both, that it was midnight when my host, with a fresh bottle, proposed another game.

I readily assented; a supply of wood was brought for the fire; my host then bade his servants go to bed, and we commenced another engagement. And thus we sat in the captain's old-fashioned library, in the dead of night, silently engrossed in mimic battle. So still, so hushed was all around that we could distinctly hear the village clock as it struck the quarters, and at intervals almost startling was the sound of a mouse rattling in the wainscot.

The servants had retired about half-an-hour; we had arrived at a critical part of the game; the captain, after a long deliberation, had taken up his remaining bishop to make a move, when, through the stillness of the building, broke a sound as of a door being forced from its hinges. The noise was but momentary, and was succeeded by the silence of the grave. The captain's hand remained suspended over the board; we looked at each other, but spoke not, moved not—scarcely breathed. For a moment or two we sat as though spell-bound.

"What can it be?" we at length exclaimed in a breath, rising together; and at the same moment again the noise broke through the stillness of the night.

"They are breaking in," said the captain.

"Have you pistols?" I inquired, both scarce speaking above our breath.

"Ay, but they are in my bedroom. Hark!"

A low whistle now rose on the air, as though proceeding from the back of the house: another, which seemed to come from the front, replied, and all again became still.

The room in which we sat was at the head of the grand staircase, and as the shutters were closed we at once concluded that our sitting up was not known to the burglars, for such they evidently were. It was a trying position, to meet which we both felt that all our nerve and coolness would be requisite. Our words were uttered in whispers, and in much less time than words can be written to tell it, we had decided on our plan of action. That such a daring attack would not be made unless there were numbers

we felt assured; although it was most probable they had ascertained the absence of the man-servant, and doubtless calculated on finding, besides the captain, none but women in the house.

My host was wonderfully cool and collected; we took off our boots, put out the lights, noiselessly took the logs off the fire, laying them apart on the hearth and extinguishing the flames, so that their light, gleaming from beneath the door, might not prate of our whereabouts. The captain then left me to reconnoitre at the head of the stairs, whilst he sought his bedroom for the pistols. Scarcely had I taken up my position when I distinctly heard footsteps approaching towards the lobby from the back part of the house. What anxious moments were those; I thought my host would never return. So absorbed was I listening to the approach of the burglars, that ere I was aware of his approach, the old gentleman had rejoined me.

I breathed more freely on receiving the weapons which he placed in my hands, feeling assured, from the daring manner in which the ruffians were entering the place, that it would require something more than our showing ourselves to make them beat a retreat. The relief I experienced on the captain's return was, however, but transient, for in handling the pistols he had given me, I found they were uncapped, though loaded. In his hurry he had forgotten to examine his own, and he soon found that one only of the brace which he had retained for himself was so furnished. Barely had we made this unpleasant discovery, when we heard the burglars, who had now reached the lobby, conversing in a suppressed tone of voice, yet every syllable they uttered fell with painful distinctness on our ears.

"Where's the lantern?" said the fellow who appeared to be leading; "shove the slide, Ned, it's as black as the devil, and I can't feel no door."

"Husht! husht!" came from the ruffian bringing up the rear, and who in obedience to the other's request drew back the shade from his lantern, throwing a gleam of light forward, which, whilst it displayed to them the position of the rooms, revealed to us, who were with breathless interest watching their movements, the advancing figures of three men, whose faces were covered with black crape. Two of them carried formidable-looking bludgeons; the other appeared to be unarmed, until, in bending to open the dining-room door, the stock of a pistol, stuck in the breast of his coat, displayed itself.

"Could I but get to the blue-room, my caps are there," said the captain, as the ruffians disappeared in the dining-room.

"In what part of the house is it?" I inquired, with not a little anxiety.

"Within a dozen paces of the foot of these stairs," replied my host; "we must get them at all risks."

At this moment we heard the crash of splintering wood.

"They are forcing open the drawers," whispered the captain, "could we be sure they would remain but a few moments we might reach the room unseen."

We were on the point of advancing for the purpose, when the light from the burglar's lantern gleamed on the wall of the lobby opposite the dining-room door, and we had barely time to draw back ere they, evidently disappointed in their search, emerged from the apartment and advanced towards the stairs.

The captain at this juncture placed his hand on my arm, and just breathing the words, "Follow me!" he led me along the landing-place

until we came to the foot of the stairs which conducted to the story above. Drawing me with him, within a recess formed by the broad staircase, we cowered down amongst a lot of lumber and awaited the ruffians' approach. Whilst in this position we exchanged but few words, agreeing that they were determined characters we had to do with, and that it would be madness to show ourselves until we were in possession of the caps. Scarcely had we concealed ourselves, when the footsteps of the marauders announced that they had gained the head of the stairs, which we had just quitted.

"To be sure," said one of them, as though supporting the proposition of a previous speaker, "have the old buffer out at once; curse me if I like this slow work."

"Ay, Ned, let's find him out," said another; "and if he isn't as nimble as nine-pence in shelling out, we'll make his bones dance a hornpipe in his skin. Here, Bill, give me the glim." Saying which, the speaker led the way, followed by the others, into a bedroom, where they were soon engaged forcing open drawers, and stowing away on their persons all the valuables they could conveniently carry.

Whilst they were thus occupied, the captain gave me a silent signal, and, together, we emerged from our hiding-place; in our hurry displacing some piece of lumber from its equilibrium, which, with a loud noise, fell to the ground. We did not pause a moment to mark what effect this might have produced on the marauders, but glided rapidly and noiselessly down the staircase.

"Thank God!" ejaculated my host, as groping about in the dark, in the blue room, he gained the object of his search; "here they are."

Having capped the pistols, a few words sufficed to determine our plan of action. We felt tolerably confident they were now in our hands. To capture one of the gang was to be a primary object; and it was agreed we were not to resort to the barkers unless they should show desperate fight. With this view, the captain furnished himself with a strong, lead-knobbed stick, which fortunately lay convenient; mine I found where I had deposited it on entering the house—in the hat-stand of the hall. This I carried in one hand, with the other one of the pistols, depositing its fellow in my jacket-pocket, ready for immediate use.

To secure one of the burglars being our principal object, so to surprise them, as to cause them to scatter, was to be the first attempt. Our arrangements were barely completed, when the screams of the women-servants rang through the house, informing us too plainly of the ruffians' progress. We ascended the stairs, and, listening at the foot of the flight of steps which led to the servants' bedrooms, heard the burglars, with horrid imprecations, threatening to murder them if they did not discover their master's retreat. The women were sobbing and begging for mercy, protesting they knew no more than they had already told.

"Come, no snivelling, mistress," said one of the ruffians; "if you can't show us your master, you can show where he keeps his money, and where the plate is, for we can't spare time to look for it. By all the devils in h—ll! if we don't get hold on 'em, we'll cut your throats."

By the scuffling of feet that followed, we found that they were descending the stairs with the women, exercising no longer caution in their movements, believing, doubtless, the captain, through fear, had concealed himself, and relying on the vigilance of their watchers outside the building.

That they had confederates we ascertained, from perceiving a window—which, from the landing where we stood commanded a view of the lawn in front—standing open. The ruffians, in ascending the stairs, had noticed it, and had evidently made use of it to communicate with their accomplices without. Conjecturing such to be the case, the captain put his head out at the window, when a voice from beneath exclaimed, “Well, have you nailed him?”

My host growled out something, which the querist might possibly have construed into “all right,” and drew in his head.

“They are numerous,” said he; “I’m afraid we shall find it necessary to use the pistols. Here they come. Back for a moment to our hiding-place.” We cowered down again in the recess that had served us so well before.

They were now close upon us, continuing their brutal imprecations at the terrified women as they descended together the flight of stairs which we had just quitted. Fortunately for our object, one of the ruffians here left his fellows with the servants, and, passing so close to our hiding-place as almost to touch us, proceeded to the open window to speak to the watch without, to see that all was right, and to report progress.

We could distinctly catch the words which he addressed to his comrade outside—they were very brief; he turned from the window, but had scarcely moved a couple of paces ere the captain, giving me the signal for action, we together threw ourselves upon him. So sudden, unexpected, and impetuous was our onset, that the fellow’s astonishment and terror for a moment deprived him of utterance, as well as power to resist. Without any difficulty we forced him to the floor, his heavy fall being the first intimation to his accomplices below that there was some check to the audacity of their proceedings. The prostration of the fallen burglar’s nervous system was, however, but momentary, which he soon displayed by violent exertions to free himself, whilst vociferating to his fellows for help. Whilst assisting the captain to keep him down, I, at the same time, administered some very unmistakeable blows with my stick to the hand of the ruffian, which held a bludgeon, and which, through excess of pain, he was compelled to relinquish. No sooner was it in my possession than I threw it out of the window, thus depriving him, as we then thought, of his only weapon, as we found he carried no fire-arms.

This was all the work of a moment, and scarce had I thrown away the fellow’s bludgeon, when the other two ruffians, drawn by his cries for help, appeared at the head of the staircase; the foremost of the two having in his right hand a pistol, which he held ready to fire.

“Blaze away,” cried the captain, addressing me, whilst applying the stock of his weapon to the cranium of our fallen foe, who was now struggling with the energy of desperation. I did not hesitate a second, but fired immediately at the foremost man. At the same moment, he, observing my figure between him and the misty light which the window afforded, discharged his pistol. I felt the charge whizzing past my cheek, the effect of which announced itself in the crashing glass of the window behind me. My fire appeared to have been equally ineffectual, for they both rushed forward. The lantern, which one of them carried, he cast to the ground, to free both hands for close action.

For the next few moments it was a desperate encounter; the captain had disabled the ruffian we had first attacked from joining in the fray,

and springing to his feet as the two others rushed forward, we became equally engaged hand to hand.

Our two opponents were both armed with heavy bludgeons; fortunately for us, possessing no fire-arms beyond the piece which had been so ineffectually discharged.

Here we had an advantage. In addition to which they were evidently surprised, having no conception that they would meet with more than one to cope with. On advancing so daringly they had not seen the captain, or else supposing their comrade, who was grappling with him, would keep him in check, were hardly prepared to meet such an equal repulsion; and even then they bore upon us with a fearlessness and determination worthy of a better cause.

The encounter was, however, but of short duration. From the fellow who assailed me I received a severe blow on the arm; and had not my stick fortunately partly parried the force of the descending stroke, the bone would inevitably have been broken. Finding I stood no chance in this species of warfare with the burly fellow who pressed upon me, with my disengaged hand I drew forth my remaining pistol. At the same instant a discharge from one of the captain's barrels, and an exclamation of pain and terror from the ruffian he was combating, in conjunction with the appearance of my piece, operated like magic on my adversary, for he instantly turned and took to his heels, being scarce a second behind his companion, who, hit by the captain, had also taken flight down the stairs.

"Are you hurt?" was my gallant host's first inquiry.

"No. Are you?"

"Merely a scratch or two which this fellow has contrived to give me with a knife, which I soon stopped his using."

This was hurriedly spoken, whilst we were both endeavouring with our handkerchiefs to tie the arms of the remaining burglar, who, stunned by the blows which the captain had given him, lay almost passive.

"These handkerchiefs will never do," said my host; "he may come round, and the others return. Quick—tear down a bell-rope out of one of the rooms; we will secure this scoundrel, at all events, whether they come to the rescue or not."

Having bound our almost insensible captive to the banisters, we descended the stairs in pursuit of the discomfited burglars, and to show a bold front should they venture upon returning.

By the light of the lantern, which the ruffians had left behind them, a pretty close sprinkling of blood showed itself up to the door where they had broken in, and through which they had retreated, telling, in language unmistakeable, that one of them had indeed been winged. We did not extend our researches beyond the door, one of the women, who seemed almost frightened to death, here joining us. From excess of fear she had well nigh lost the power of speech, and it was some little time ere we gleaned from her, that when the burglars, hearing their comrade's cry, had left them, herself and fellow-servant had endeavoured to escape from the house, but having seen two men on the watch had run back again; that Mary had got out some way through the cellars she thought, but she had not sufficient courage to follow her.

"I trust she has got clear off," said the captain; "and if she has we shall have half the village here in no time."

We returned to our prisoner, who had partly recovered from the severe

visitation his skull had received, and he glowered upon us, as we approached, like a caged tiger. At my request, the captain now bared his wounded arm, when two gashes, inflicted by the ruffian's knife, revealed themselves. Under the circumstances, there are few who would have blamed my host, had he, in the struggle, instead of stunning, blown out the fellow's brains.

Whilst we were thus engaged, and endeavouring to devise some plan of proceeding until morning* should bring us assistance, a tremendous uproar and the sound of voices announced the approach of a numerous body, and in a few moments some twenty people of the village, armed with a variety of weapons, came tumbling into the house, led by the housemaid, Mary, who it appeared had succeeded in effecting an escape and giving the alarm. Guarded by a number of these timely visitors, our prisoner, without loss of time, was conducted to the village, and safely secured in the strong room which served for a prison, under the immediate care of that lynx-eyed and important functionary, the head and only constable of Sandy Hollow. I may as well here observe, that from thence the prisoner in due course was introduced to the interior of the county gaol.

Whilst some of the rustics took charge of the captured burglar, others commenced an active search in the neighbourhood, which was unfortunately unattended with success. On making an examination, we discovered that the ruffians had, by means of a pole, scaled the yard wall in the rear of the building, and with a crowbar, which we found on the spot, had broken open the scullery door. There was but little reason to doubt that they were aware of the absence of the man-servant, and believing that, besides the captain, there was only female domestics in the house, had, doubtless, calculated on a safe and easy pillage.

• Fortunately, amongst the reinforcement from the village, was the head assistant of the surgeon of the place, who dressed the captain's wounds, which, though ugly to look at, I was glad to hear were not dangerous.

During the following day I stayed with my gallant host, and in the evening, my horse having become itself again after its salutary rest, came forth from the stable, eager for work and brisk as a kitten. Enough to say, that he was turned out from the masterly hands of Sam, who, criticising his points, was high in his encomiums, and who, with a delighted eye, beheld him, obedient to my word, bound away like a bird from the door of the Flying Childers.

When I next met the captain, it was at the trial of the captured burglar, when the ruffian, having doggedly refused to betray his accomplices, was transported for life.

The events of the night which I have related have become a stock story—a standing dish with the captain. In his relation of the circumstances, he ever attributes to a Providential interposition the unlooked-for causes that led me to join him that night. That my horse should have shown symptoms of distress and exhaustion—the night become so boisterous—and the inn so destitute of everything in the shape of comfort—were, at all events, a fortunate combination of apparent untoward events. They were, indeed, as my gallant friend is wont to observe, the causes of giving him a companion, whose presence, in keeping him up beyond his customary hour of retiring to rest, had, in all probability, saved him from becoming a victim to “The Night Attack.”

THE CONFEDERATES ; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF
PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XVII.

A FEVER of excitement prevailed throughout Brussels on the day appointed for the entrance of the confederate nobles. Scarcely where the gates thrown open, when a long file of horsemen, headed by Henry of Brederode and Louis of Nassau, rode through, and took their way towards the heart of the city. Besides the sword, then the ordinary badge of rank, each cavalier had two large petronels at his saddle bow—a circumstance which was remarked with no slight mistrust by the authorities.

The people, gradually increasing in numbers as the procession moved forward, almost impeded by their swarms the progress of the riders ; and each throughfare, by-street, and lane yielded its tribute to the dense mass of human beings crowding round the confederates. It was observable, however, that there was a total absence of any demonstration of feeling on the part of the multitude, whether favourable or otherwise, if we except a vague, indefinite terror and amazement with which the greater portion appeared to be stricken.

But, apparently anxious to avoid creating any disturbance, the horsemen proceeded leisurely, and with great precaution, through the now advancing and now receding tide of the populace. Their progress was necessarily slow; and much time elapsed before they came to the Palace of Orange, in front of which they made a halt, when the two leaders, having dispersed their followers each to seek his quarters, or the friends who awaited him, entered the palace, and made for the apartments that had been prepared for them.

Although no less than four hundred men formed the body that had entered the city in a regular troop, the whole of that day solitary riders, whose costume betrayed neither their rank nor their business, were constantly dropping in; and most of them, it was remarked by the idle crowd that continued to gather in groups before one palace or another, took their way to that of Orange. Among these, a young cavalier was observed, whose countenance expressed annoyance at the impertinent curiosity of which he was the object. Attended by a single servant, whose dark, plain livery, displayed the colours of no noble house, he was endeavouring to force his way more speedily than was practicable through the shoals of people, of different ages and sexes, who encumbered the streets. At length, fairly wearied with his unsuccessful attempts, he passed into a dark, narrow alley, where, finding that he still attracted observation, though on a lesser scale, he dismounted, and, flinging the reins of his horse to his retainer, threaded on foot the many throughfares leading from that spot to the Palace of Orange, which seemed to be, as it had been that of so many on that day, the bourn of his journey.

Here, too, a degree of noisy bustle prevailed, very much at variance with its usually solemn, even pompous regularity. The court exhibited not only its customary crowd of retainers of every sort, but strange faces

and strange liveries seemed to make themselves at home within its precincts. Arkel, for it was he, missed, also, that degree of attention which was usually bestowed upon visitors, and wondered how he was thus permitted to circulate, unquestioned, through the deserted corridors of the building. He had penetrated "o far as to ascend a private staircase which, he well knew, would lead to the apartments generally assigned to Count Louis, without encountering the least interruption.

“The measure works more powerfully than I had expected,” thought the youth.

As he passed along the gallery at the head of the stairs, a page, apparently loitering about the anteroom for his own pleasure, met his eye: he wore the rich livery of Nassau. Arkel, therefore, made up to him and inquired for the count. The boy assured him that he was not in his apartments—where he was he could not tell—he would go and inquire. After the lapse of a few minutes he returned with the intelligence that his master was in the armory, alone, and disengaged. Thither Arkel accordingly proceeded; he was, however, surprised and not a little abashed when, instead of his friend and leader in the career of plotting, which he had so warmly though secretly embraced, he saw there—alone, indeed, and disengaged—not the younger, but the elder brother.

Although the person of William of Orange, commonly called “*The Silent*,” was not striking by its proportions, nor his countenance by any remarkable combination of feature, it was impossible to gaze on him and not feel that one stood in no ordinary presence. The beholder might, at first, have been embarrassed to discover the true source of this impression; but a closer acquaintance would have enabled him to trace it to that superiority of mind and intellect which lighted up his deep-set eye, and pale, thoughtful countenance, to whose power even those yielded who were scarcely conscious of its existence. His manners, partaking of the lofty grace that distinguished the great of that period, were tinged, besides, with a gravity almost amounting to an habitual melancholy. He deserved fully the epithet of “*Silent*,” which he had early in life acquired; though not in the vulgar acceptation of the word, for he spoke well and willingly; but never did his words betray more of his thoughts than he exactly meant to convey to the ears of his listeners. Whilst all affectation of ~~prudence~~ was carefully avoided, the virtue itself was never under the control of a wiser head. Distrustful and watchful in the hour of prosperity, but fertile in expedient, and never discouraged in adversity; bold and even daring in the hour of need; ever on his guard against fortune and man; patient, persevering—far-seeing, these were qualities he possessed in no ordinary degree, which, when united, may be justly termed “the genius” of statesmen and rulers. William of Nassau was organised to be a chief and a leader, and owed less to adventitious circumstances than most great men whom history has recorded in her pages.

Arkel, on perceiving his mistake, hastily apologised for his abrupt intrusion; and explaining that his visit had been intended for Count Louis, to whom he wished to communicate matters of importance, he would have retired, but the prince’s courtesy induced him to remain.

“You see me here,” said he, “loitering away an idle hour. I am overlooking the embellishing of a gun which I intend to give my brother Louis. A young man like you must love to look on such things. I will profit by your opinion.”

At the prince's command, an aged armourer brought forward a half-finished matchlock. It was clumsy in form, bell-mouthed, short and thick in the barrel, and heavy in the shoulder-piece; but much less cumbersome than the celebrated muskets with rests, introduced into the Netherlands at a later period by the Duke of Alba, which so charmed Brantôme. The stock was carefully inlaid with ivory and black horn, after a most finished and complicated design. In the centre of the ornamental work was a small shield, containing the arms of Nassau, accurately wrought in the same materials. The old man, gratified by the attentive examination which Arkel bestowed upon his handicraft, produced more samples, and, among others, a breastplate and gauntlets inlaid with gold, of matchless beauty.

"Have you, indeed, unassisted, achieved this work?" inquired Arkel.

"Conrad," said the prince, with a smile, "suffers no one to share his triumphs, nor even to learn his art. He is possessed, as you see, of great skill. He has inherited a few valuable secrets from his father, who, in his turn, had them from his, and so forth. Tradition says that one of his ancestors accompanied one of mine to the Crusades, where he learnt the art of damaskining of the Saracens, by whom both were, for many years, kept prisoners; for Conrad's fathers have ever been as true to mine, as he is to me."

The room in which they stood was hung all around with various suits of armour belonging to every country and to every epoch. The collection formed a perfect history of its progress through succeeding centuries, from the chain-mail used in the first tournaments, down to the more costly, though less cumbersome, harness then in use. Weapons of offence were classed with the same attention to order. Many of these were enriched with precious stones, gold, and silver, and the value of the whole was beyond estimation. Although of more modern invention, many small brass cannons, specimens of the gradual improvement these engines had of late years undergone, were ranged alongside the wall. Distributed about the room were also models of entire towns, with their lace-like towers, streets, and fosses—of fortifications and plans of castles and gardens, most accurately and delicately carved in wood.

Arkel's attention soon became riveted by a few remarkable specimens of armour which, the prince observed, belonged to his son Philip. They had made part of the collection of the late Count of Büren, and had been placed in their present position in order to make more complete the effect of the collection, by filling up certain interstices in the epochs.

"It is natural," continued he, "that a young man like you should feel much pleasure in such objects. I beg, whenever you feel inclined, you will pay this room a visit; it is an agreeable way of passing a leisure hour."

Then abruptly changing the subject, he demanded of his visitor if he had not of late been to Antwerp; and, without allowing the surprised youth time to reply, inquired if it were not to him that Count Louis had intrusted a small commission for himself.

This small commission was to the amount of many thousand florins.

Arkel was not altogether pleased that Count Louis had thus divulged the secret of his movements to the prince; but a second thought convinced him that there might exist a more perfect understanding between the brothers than was generally supposed. He could, at all events, gain

nothing by an attempt at evasion; he therefore frankly replied in the affirmative.

"How found you the spirits of the citizens—much chafed, doubtless?"

"I had but little opportunity of judging—my stay there was brief; but I heard as much from a person who must, I think, have been well informed."

"I feared it would be so," said Orange, negligently, as if the words rather escaped his lips than his thoughts. "Your father has many friends there;—in what town, indeed, in these lands, is he without such? Surely, your arrival gave pleasure?"

"My family are altogether ignorant of my visit to that place, and I thought it best, in the present state of affairs, to assume another name for the nonce. It could matter but little, as I saw but two persons besides my host during the short time I spent there."

"You were right; your name might have drawn attention upon you. At this period the public spirit is in such a state of effervescence in the provinces, that one should avoid everything likely to cause a sensation. By-the-by, are you aware that your father has been here some days? You may be ignorant of this, as I see you are just from horseback. Nay, nay, no excuses. But where can Louis and Brederode tarry all this time? I advise you, my young friend, unless what you have to tell my brother be urgent, to postpone your visit and your communication for another moment. His time, at this juncture, can scarcely be called his own."

The prince evidently intended to express that he had extended his courtesy as far as he thought convenient or necessary. But Arkel hesitated; his colour went and came, and his heart beat almost audibly with the contending feelings by which it was agitated. The natural timidity of his age, augmented as it was by being in the presence of one who awed not only his enemies but even his friends, was yet increased by some unpleasant misgivings as to the propriety of the step he was meditating. Fully impressed with the importance of the packet he had in his possession, and being uncertain as to the course it were best to pursue, he had, as we have seen, taken his way to the castle of Purmerend, with the intention of consulting with its lord, who, all circumstances considered, would, perhaps, have been his best guide. The sudden and unexpected departure of that nobleman for Brussels had, however, whilst it disappointed his views, allowed him time for reflection. The opinions of the Count of Egmont were not publicly known. Whilst he was esteemed by every one as the very flower of chivalry, his open, bland manners, affable to all, rather established the idea that he was attached to no party, than they encouraged the hopes of any one in particular. Thus Arkel, after having, during the few days he spent in the castle, debated with himself in what manner he should proceed, had come to the final determination of delivering the packet into the hands of Count Louis or those of Brederode; "For," thought he, "it is my first duty to serve my own party." Now, for the first time, the idea presented itself of submitting his important deposit to the inspection of the Prince of Orange. The temptation was strong; but he still felt that strange reluctance to give up a plan once adopted, which often leads men to persist in a line of conduct even when unforeseen circumstances render it no longer necessary. He replied, therefore, that he had

a most important communication to make to his highness's guests, which made it very desirable that he should be admitted to speech of them as soon as possible.

The prince, more influenced, probably, by an almost mechanical habit, or, we should rather say, by one of the predominant qualities of his nature, than from any particular interest in Arkel, had, during the greater part of their conversation, kept his piercing gaze rivetted on his countenance, and watched its workings closely; and he had ere this come to the conclusion, highly creditable to his knowledge of human nature, that the youth had something on his mind of which it much importuned him to disburden himself—something it might interest himself to know. No chance of this nature, however slight, was ever neglected by him. He had found it of untold advantage throughout his busy career to attend to what might seem trifling and unimportant to others; and as the poetical imaginations of some will conjure up a graceful image, or derive a pleasing thought, from objects which, to the duller minds of others, would convey nothing, so the peculiar alchemy of the prince's sharpened intellects would turn trifles into positive advantages to himself and his plans. By no means startled, therefore, by Arkel's insistence, he said, calmly,

"And cannot your communication be intrusted to a third party, my young friend? I should, perhaps, be as wise an adviser as my brother—or even," added he, with a smile, "as Brederode himself."

Carried away by these words, Arkel joyfully exclaimed,

"If your grace would, indeed, consent to become, not my adviser only, but my guide, in the first difficulty my life has yet known, I should be but too happy."

"Speak," said the prince, encouragingly.

Elated with the idea of importance with which the disclosure he was about to make, and the treasure he thought himself possessed of, were about to invest him, Arkel paused yet a moment ere he proceeded. He should, then, have a secret in common with the master-spirit of the age! Perhaps the papers he was about to deliver might influence, nay change, the very course of his politics. Then, again, they might not be so all-important as he had fancied them, and he might only reap a well-earned censure for having so long retained them in his possession. At all events, he would remit them to the prince, to dispose of them in the manner he should think most advisable, and thus get rid of a responsibility which began to weigh upon his spirits. All care at the conclusion of his rapid reflections vanished from his ingenuous countenance; a smile, betraying the relief of his mind, stole gradually over it; his hand was hastily thrust into his bosom,—when the favourite page of the prince entered the apartment.

So eager was the boy with the message he had to deliver, that he scarcely noticed the presence of Arkel; and thus the latter, both from his proximity to the parties and from the degree of resonance produced by the peculiar form of the armory, distinctly heard his words, though they were spoken in a low tone, or rather what was meant to be such.

"My lord, the Spaniard is without, awaiting your commands. This is the hour appointed."

A slight shade of impatience passed over the prince's brow. He replied in a whisper, that was, nevertheless, distinctly audible,

"The Spaniard may wait. On no account suffer him to depart. You understand? I will see him presently."

The obedient sprite disappeared; and, turning to Arkel, the prince was about to propose adjourning to his cabinet, where they would be safer from interruption, when again the door opened, and another page appeared, and announced the near approach of the Counts of Egmont, Mansfeldt, Horn, and others of equal distinction, who were making towards the armory, under the impression that the Counts of Nassau and Brederode were there. When, in answer to his hasty inquiries, he heard that his brother was yet from home, the prince determined on receiving these distinguished visitors himself, and gave orders accordingly; although Arkel fancied he could trace upon his features an expression of disappointment. He might have said something more—would probably have fixed a more convenient day or hour for their interrupted conversation to be resumed, but he was prevented by the entrance of his visitors.

Arkel vanished by one door as the noblemen came in at the other, and he found himself in a passage different from that by which he had approached the armory. He was quite unacquainted with this part of the building, and was fearful lest, by threading unknown corridors, he might intrude upon some of the more private apartments; nor did the very sparing light that found its way through the few small and irregular apertures, which served rather to let in air than the rays of the sun, tend to diminish his embarrassment. As his eye, however, grew more familiar with the demi-obscurity, he perceived at the upper end of the passage two figures, who had evidently been made aware of his coming by the sound of the closing door. The light from one of the loopholes near which he stood fell full upon one whose gay colours and diminutive size showed him to be the page who had first interrupted his interview with the prince; the other, whose face was muffled in his short cloak, must be the Spaniard whom he had announced.

Involuntarily to that word Arkel associated the idea of Chievosa. Whether, however, this was suggested by the mere word which, twice repeated, struck upon his ear, or by the stranger's appearance, he could not determine; but every additional glance, as he remained for a few minutes uncertain how to proceed, convinced him more forcibly of the identity which at first he imagined conjured up merely by the power of his own fancy.

His curiosity at length got the better of his desire to avoid recognition, and, advancing to the page, he requested to be conducted to the apartments of Count Louis.

The page hesitated for a moment, then consulted with his companion in a whisper. The attentive Arkel could not catch the muttered reply, nor even the faintest sound of the voice, whose peculiar sweetness would, he conceived, have betrayed at once the individuality he sought to ascertain. The youth appeared satisfied; and saying aloud, "It is well, I shall be back instantly," he prepared to do Arkel's bidding.

His young conductor was well known to Arkel, his brother having filled the same office in his own family for many years. They were sons of a nobleman whose large estates, like those of his own father, lay north of Gueldres, who was considered very fortunate in having secured to his children such *noble et bonne nourriture*, as the training of youths of high descent was then termed. As they traversed the turnings and

windings leading to the more public part of the building, therefore, Arkel, willing to confirm himself in his opinion, ventured, on the strength of old acquaintance, to inquire the name of the person whom they had left behind.

The boy started at this abrupt question; and Arkel, seeing his confusion, maliciously repeated his inquiry, rather with the view of further disconcerting his companion than from an impertinent desire of penetrating into the prince's privacy. The page, however, recovered his composure, and answered firmly, "Who comes here or goes hence are things which concern the prince, and him alone. You can have no interest in asking."

Arkel felt the rebuke, but replied, laughing,

"Come, Master Page, that was well parried, but I am not satisfied. I happen to know both the Spaniard and his name—perhaps part of his errand too. Come, here's a guess. What do you say to Lopez Chievosa?"

The boy remained silent.

"Have you lost your tongue, Sir Page?" said Arkel, haughtily, "that you answer me not."

"Why do you ask questions which I ought not to answer?" said the page, raising his large blue eyes with candour to the face of his interrogator. "Would you have me betray my trust, or tell a falsehood? I will do neither."

"Well," exclaimed Arkel, covering with a gay laugh the confusion he really felt, "I will never, henceforth, allow the vulgar proverb, 'Liar like a page,' to be uttered in my presence; for I have, at last, found one who proves its falsehood. That is right, my lad; persevere thus," continued he, with a patronising nod; "I am glad to have tried your mettle."

The arch expression in the page's countenance showed that he was not quite the dupe of the turn which Arkel had given to the matter, but, impatient to rejoin the person he had left in the gallery, he hurried away without reply. He had scarcely departed, when the door of an anteroom opened, and Count Broderode, refreshed by an elegant morning toilette, made his appearance. He looked surprised, and not exactly pleased, when his eye fell upon Arkel.

"Why so late, Lamoral? We expected you long ago at Breda; we even waited for you. This is not the fitting hour or place for informing us of the result of your visit to Antwerp."

"I was delayed by an unexpected circumstance, and was very much disappointed, upon my arrival at Bois le Duc, to find that you and even John Marnix had flown. I awaited at Purmerend the news of your arrival here, and am now come to join you."

"It is most unlucky that we did not meet as we agreed; but now, my young friend, that we have done so, it must be my first request that you leave us in all haste. Your best method of serving the cause is by instantly withdrawing yourself from Brussels, where, if you stay, it will be next to impossible not to betray your connexion with us. Nay, that is an essential point, Lamoral, and one which you must concede. We are not yet secure enough of your father's good-will to risk his discovering you to be one of us. We might, perhaps, lose you, as we are about to lose one of our most valuable members who, in obedience to his father's persuasions and commands, will no longer be seen among us. You would

not, could not disobey yours; nor would I, myself a father, countenance such a step. We might, by a premature discovery, not only risk your loss, but even our hopes of eventually bringing your noble father to act in concert with us. You see, Lamoral, I am in a great hurry. Count Louis and I scarcely had time to change our riding costume for a more beseeming one, when we were informed of the arrival of many friends. We cannot make them tarry; I cannot just now argue the point with you, but I entreat you to grant me my pleasure in this."

"But, my dear count, what I have to communicate may be of such importance as even to outweigh all other considerations. I claim but a quarter of an hour's patience—nay, half that time will suffice."

"I cannot now even allow you the slightest fragment of it, for here comes Count Louis—you know how little he can endure to wait—so really, my young friend, if you have aught to say so very material to our interests, I beg you will write it, or bide your chance of finding us less engaged; now we cannot attend to you, or rather, I should say, to any secret conference. Believe me, Lamoral, the most important thing at present is, that you go hence as soon as possible. You ask whither? Why, anywhere, my dear boy, to get out of the way. To Antwerp, if you will; in a few days I shall be there myself, and ready to give you as much of my time as you may please to command. Above all, do not dream of appearing at the banquet which Cuyllemberg is to give in our honour. But see, Count Louis is impatient. Adieu! adieu!"

Vain were the hesitating words of Arkel; they were lost in the distance as the two confederates, having hurriedly though kindly greeted him, took their way in all haste towards the armory.

"Fate herself seems to have set her will against it," thought the young man; "and now I remember me, if there be any truth in astrology, to-day is one on which it is unlucky to reveal secrets. The difficulty I find in getting rid of mine is like a warning. Such secret hints of nature ought never to be repulsed when understood. I'll even follow Brederode's advice. I'll meet him at Antwerp; but I will attend the dinner of Count Cuyllemberg in spite of him. A few days cannot make much difference, and I shall have still more leisure during that time to reflect upon this affair. As no one seems at liberty to consult with me, or even to listen to what I have to say, I shall have but the more time to consult with myself, and listen to the voice of my own presentiments. At all events, the packet is safe for the moment. No one guesses in whose possession it now is, and I am yet free to deliver it to whom it may best suit me. How easy it were, after all, and how proper, to give it to my father—but he, too, is engaged."

So saying, or rather thinking, Arkel left the palace, and sought, through the thronged city, the dark alley in which his follower awaited him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NIGHT gradually stole upon the city of Brussels, and with the help of the patrol, sent the inhabitants to their homes if not to their beds. It overtook the traveller by land and by sea, and caused the world to seek its temporary repose. Sleep sank, with its golden dreams, on the eyes of the young and the innocent; with here and there, perchance, an exception, where the brighter visions of some untried heart in its spring, kept some fair lid

from drooping. But many, very many, on that calm night counted the weary hours as they chimed from a neighbouring church, whilst the restlessness of fever, pain, or the pang of remorse, banished the slumbers they vainly courted.

How many are watchers, and how different the motives that make them such! Those who love and meet by stealth, whose smiles are shrouded by the same veil that may soon, perchance, conceal their tears—the happy mother whose ear is greeted by her infant's first cry—the bereaved and the departing—the laborious student and the giddy reveller—the admiring astronomer who gazes with ecstasy on the starry skies, and the nun who kneels before the marble of her altar, and looks up with hope to the gloomy vault of her chapel; all these find life as busy and as fraught with care in the light of the moon as in that of day.

Amongst the unquiet spirits of the night none was more active than that of William of Orange. As the hour of one struck from the church near the *Palais de la Cour*, he left his room, and preceded by his trusty page, bearing a silver flambeau, moved swiftly, though with a noiseless step, towards another part of the building. Perchance the light that gleamed from one solitary window of the government palace, was that by which Margaret of Parma was devising some new spell to lay that most dreaded of spirits at rest for ever.

In a small circular room leading from the banquet-chamber sat three gentlemen, conversing round a table. A couple of large, yellow wax-tapers shed a calm, steady light upon their countenances, whilst a cheerful fire, blazing in the chimney, cast upon them occasionally a warmer glow, revealing their varied expressions to the Prince of Orange, as he glided in and took his seat amongst them, his keen eye resting alternately on the open brow and cheerful smile of Egmont, on the calm, collected aspect of Mansfeldt, and on the arch, bold features of De Horn.

"We cannot, we ought not as Flemings, to submit to such tyranny any longer!" the latter was vehemently exclaiming. "It is in vain that you tell me I say this too bluntly and too openly: it is only by opposing an enemy boldly that there is a chance of conquest. Liberty must wrestle with her oppressor if she would not be crushed—she must struggle, and that fiercely, if tyranny is not to rivet her chains for ever!"

The prince looked pleased, but Egmont's full, manly voice was raised in opposition:

"I, too, am a Fleming, and see with a bleeding heart our privileges destroyed, and our country in danger of becoming, not only a province of, but a prey to Spain; and, were we free, I should be the first to propose myself as your leader in any perilous adventure that could tend to avert so great an evil. But indissoluble ties bind us to Philip. We owe him allegiance, for he is our sovereign—gratitude, for most of us have received personal favours of no mean kind at his hands and those of his father; and most of all are we bound to him in reverence and love, as members of the noble order of which he is the head. Shall we, with the emblem of innocence and faith resting on our bosoms, sully the heart within? Shall knights and nobles fling their vows to the air, as though they were obscure hinds whom fetters alone can bind? No!" continued he, with increasing vehemence. "even death cannot absolve the traitor from deserved ignominy. The old laws of our forefathers are not yet

forgotten. The lists may be closed against the son of the rebel—his arms reversed—his honours may become extinct, and the shame of his deed rest upon his line."

"And his estates confiscated," added Mansfeldt, with a sigh; "his children outcasts from the land of their birth. Yes! the sufferings that rebellion may entail, even when dared in the fairest cause, are so great as to outweigh any advantages that could ever result from it. I would not plant a flower that could only bloom in blood and ashes."

"Had Brutus thought thus, Rome had never been free," said De Horn, moodily.

"For my part," said the Prince of Orange, "I agree in some measure with Count Egmont. The crimson ribbon around our throats binds the hand, although it cannot enchain the mind."

"Then throw from you," exclaimed De Horn, impatiently, "the contemptible trinket; for what else can that be called which enslaves a man's actions?"

"The word of a knight alone should bind him for ever," observed Egmont; "how much more his oath! And this very badge which you despise, is an honour conferred by the King of Spain."

"Then let us send it back to Spain. The emblem that Philip wears, or gives, should be a wolf, and not a lamb," said De Horn, vehemently flinging on the table the small golden ornament of the Fleece, that hung around his neck by a crimson scarf. "There!—do like me—throw away with this band all the scruples that the wearing of it lays upon your hearts, and, like mine, suffer yours to beat henceforth but for your country!"

"It were unwise, to say the least," observed Mansfeldt, "to deprive ourselves of so powerful a shield as the Golden Fleece may prove."

"And who would renounce willingly the honour of belonging to the most noble Order existing?" said Egmont. "Who would not value that emblem which suffers none other to stand near its greatness?"

"Yes," said De Horn, with a bitter smile; "Faith, it would seem, can suffer no other virtue to thrive beside her. No one, at least, will say that Mercy or Justice go hand-in-hand with her just now. But you, Mansfeldt, care not if these be wanting."

"You do our friend injustice," said the prince: "he expressed himself in the council as generously as any of us against the Inquisition. Prudence is wisdom, and shows not lack of feeling."

"Thank you for judging me rightly," said Mansfeldt, reddening as he spoke.

"I do not mean to deny," continued the prince, "that the impulses of De Horn meet, in some degree, with my sympathy. But, perhaps, our vows are not so binding as we imagine. Perhaps, again, the Fleece has not more power to protect than could have the lamb of which it is the emblem. Perchance, too, if several of us were to send back to the king this greatest mark of his favour, it might give him a timely and salutary warning. It may be wholesome to let him know that others can dare as well as he."

"I think you will scarcely find aught to justify such a measure in the tenets of the Order," said Mansfeldt.

"We had better read and examine," exclaimed De Horn. "It will go hard if I cannot convince you."

"You would persuade us to our ruin, if we were willing," observed Mansfeldt.

"There may stand nothing against our renouncing the Order, if we chose no longer to remain its members," said Orange. "This deserves consideration."

After some further debate, it was agreed to refer to the book in which were transcribed the laws and principles founded by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, upon his institution of the Order, in honour of his alliance with Isabel of Portugal; and to which were appended the new regulations that had been introduced by successive monarchs. Each knight, on his investiture, received a copy of this document, which, at his death, together with the collar of the Order, his heirs were bound to restore to the king, who, in turn, transmitted them to him who was elected in lieu of the deceased; for the number of the members admissible was limited, and the death or the disgrace of a knight alone made room for another. Francis Verdugo, one of the gentlemen of Count Mansfeldt, was sent by the prince to bring from its retreat this treasured volume. He soon returned, bearing a box of gold exquisitely wrought, through the interstices of which a crimson velvet lining was visible. The prince unclosed it with a small golden key, and removing the satin envelope, produced the small vellum deposit.

"Here, Verdugo," said he, "seek out the rules, and read them in a clear, audible voice."

The person thus addressed took the volume respectfully from the prince's hand, and ran his eye rapidly over a few of the pages, as he suffered them to escape through his fingers. The calligraphy was beautiful; it was no where illuminated, and its extreme simplicity harmonised but little with the pomps of which it spoke.

"We, Philip, by the grace of God Duke of Burgundy," began Verdugo, in a monotonous tone of voice.

"Pass that," said the prince.

The reader, having turned a few more pages, continued:—

"*First day.*—The knights shall be habited in long, flowing, crimson-velvet robes, trimmed with flints, sparks, and fleeces, lined with minever, and escaloped hoods of the same. This day shall they go to Mass, and each deposit a gold piece with the treasurer of the Order, return to the palace of the king, and dine with him as brothers."

Verdugo again suffered his eye to run over some lines:—

"*Second day.*—They shall issue from the palace of the sovereign covered with long, black mantles, with black hoods and *cornettes*. They shall thus proceed in solemn array to the church, and attend the Service for the Dead.

"*Third day.*—Their robes shall be of snow-white damask, with hoods, and wreath of crimson velvet—hem—hem—attend Mass, and each offer a wax taper, bearing his arms, to the shrine for the dead. The king sits as head of the—",

"Spare us that!" exclaimed De Horn, impatiently. "We've all gone through the mummetry."

"There can exist no grandeur, or rather no impression of it can be conveyed to the mind, but through the medium of pomp and solemnity," observed the prince.

"But grandeur and greatness are not always synonymous. Can you turn to nothing more important—more to the point, Verdugo?"

"No," answered the reader, again turning over the leaves, and seeking, though apparently in vain, something relative to the subject under discussion. His eye glanced over pages full of the costume of the Order, and its gradual improvements or changes; the number of knights admissible; the ceremony of election and of reception; the manner of holding the chapters; but nothing of consequence could he see.

"Give me the book," said the prince, with some severity of manner. "I shall probably be able to find what we want. Ha! here it is:—'The knights are all brothers, and shall be bound in love and unity as such, nor shall they shrink from each other.' Here, again—'The duke, or king, shall not determine upon war or peace, nor upon any great innovation or change whatsoever, without assembling the knights to inform them of his will, and demand their opinions and votes; nor shall he decide on aught without their consent.'"

The prince read in a clear, steady voice; not a word but had its full value.

"Methinks," continued he, "the king has set us the example of perjury. He has forgotten to consult, or even to trust, his knightly counsellors on so many points, that they, who cannot eject him from among them, might withdraw from a bond which he has been the first to break."

"For myself," said De Horn, "I have no scruples whatever on that head. The Venetians boast that they were Venetians before they were Christians. Surely, we ought not to forget that we were Flemings before we were knights, and that our country once knew freedom."

"Will your grace allow me the book for one moment," said Mansfeldt, "and for one moment only. There," rapidly glancing over the pages, "I have it," and rising, he read in a high, impressive voice—

"The knight who shall be found traitor to his king, and acting against his allegiance, shall be accused, tried, and condemned for perjury, deprived of the noble insignias of the Order, and given over to the laws of his country to be punished according to his deserts." Mansfeldt closed the book, and continued:—"Gentlemen, I need not remind you how the act you meditate will be viewed by the sovereign whom it is meant to insult. Are you willing to submit to his displeasure, or able to cope with it? Neither, I should hope and imagine. Provoke not a struggle which can but end in mischief to yourselves. As a friend and brother do I warn you. Be persuaded by my voice; if you will not, then let me withdraw from amongst you. But be not rash, I entreat you. Draw not the wrath of the sovereign upon you by a measure which will diminish, nay, even destroy, all your power over your countrymen; which will, I make bold to say, break the chain that yet binds together the nobles of this land. De Horn be advised. Pause, Prince of Orange, and think of this."

"You are right," said the prince, calmly; "take up your chain again, De Horn, *it is not yet time!* as the king says, when he revolves in his mind the cheapest and safest way of taking the life of a Nassau. It is not yet his; though he may, peradventure, take it one day. It is not yet time to act, but," continued he, rising from his seat, "it is fully that to seek our pillows."

"What noise is that?" exclaimed De Horn, changing colour, and fixing his eye sternly upon the arras. "Surely no spy could find his way here, and at this hour!"

The look of Orange lighted upon Verdugo's countenance, just as a faint smile was fading from his contemptuous lip. The expression did not escape him.

"I would not vouch for that," said he, fixing the eye of that gentleman until it quailed before his steady gaze; then, glancing at his master — "We are taught to believe that kings are the representatives of the Highest. His eye and ear are everywhere; and to supply their deficiency in this respect, do princes oftentimes see and hear with the faculties of others, and thus may be said to be omnipresent. Never was bar or bolt so strong, or the hour so dark, but these organs of royalty will defy the one, and set at nought the other; nor is there a veil so deep but their senses will penetrate its folds. Again that sound! — a rustle behind the arras. By Heaven! gentlemen, we will seize the traitor!"

With his eyes still fixed on Verdugo, whose sallow complexion gave way to a deathlike pallor, the prince rose and made towards the door; whilst Egmont and De Horn precipitated themselves, with drawn swords, against the tapestry. The fiery noblemen had already made a couple of rents in the loom, before they would admit the truth that the only resistance they encountered was the wall behind the arras, and that nought but air intervened. They then became aware, for the first time, that Mansfeldt had followed the prince into the passage beyond. They came up with them, but the light from the flambeau, which Orange had hastily snatched, was too feeble to penetrate the obscurity beyond the immediate spot where they stood grouped together.

"The search is now vain," said the prince, turning towards them. "A look as calm as if nothing had occurred to ruffle it. "Count Mansfeldt and I arrived in time to see a dark form glide swiftly along the passage, but so cautiously keeping out of the rays of the light as to render detection impossible. It darted boldly across towards a private staircase, through which it is next to impossible that he should not have escaped. Especially as I doubt not the traitor, whoever he may be, is possessed of private keys, as well as an accurate knowledge of my house."

"But surely he could not vanish through the wall," exclaimed Egmont.

"No; but through the door that the arras conceals most easily. Raise the tapestry, and you will, doubtless, find he has left it open in his hurry to escape. What makes this more extraordinary is, that I fancied myself the sole possessor of the key to that long since condemned entrance. Said I not well, my friends, that priests are right in terming kings God's representatives on this earth? For their eyes and their ears are indeed everywhere."

"They would be both blind and deaf to all things were it not for their spies," said De Horn.

"They are not, perhaps, the only men who resort to such means," said Mansfeldt, emphatically, at the same time turning his clear, blue eye full on William of Nassau.

"Well," observed De Horn, impetuously, "it is better to pay a spy than to be one."

The colour mounted to the count's very brow, and tinged his temples with crimson.

"I do not know to whom or what your allusions tend, De Horn, nor do I seek to understand them. At my years the blood grows cooler, and the reason, it may be, becomes all the freer. I repeat, I wish to understand you in nothing; but I will again state my own opinions on the discussions of this night so clearly as to avoid, if possible, all misunderstanding on your part, or that of any one here present."

"Before or behind the arras?" insisted De Horn, with a sarcastic smile.

"We need dread no further interruption," said the prince; "my trusty page keeps watch without."

But the reply of Orange did not prevent Mansfeldt from coolly proceeding in the same tone in which he had commenced:

"Nay, my friends, it is not from the fear of having this night's conference made known that I beg, once more, to withdraw from all future meetings of a similar tendency; but because I am convinced they will end in betraying those who figure in them into actions which my principles disavow—my prudence forbids. You, Count De Horn, should be too knightly, and you, Prince of Orange, too wise, not to see that what you meditated but now must compromise both honour and safety; I, at least, will countenance so overt an act of contempt towards our sovereign neither by my words nor my presence."

"I am with you, Mansfeldt," exclaimed Egmont, pressing the golden emblem of innocence to his bosom; "for I will never give up this badge of honour but when summoned by my God or my king."

"You are perfectly right, my friends," said the prince; "consult your consciences, and," added he, with a peculiarly expressive smile, "the dictates of prudence. De Horn's proposal did not entirely meet with my approbation from the first."

"I do not care," exclaimed De Horn, angrily, "who disapproves of it? I am proud of daring to proclaim my sentiments openly."

"Tush, De Horn," said Egmont, soothingly, for he saw his friend had arrived at a pitch of excitement at which he might easily forget himself beyond recall, and make a quarrel at a most untimely moment. "Tush! Speak not of openness to us who have met by stealth and by night, that its veil might the better conceal the mystery of our assembling. It is personal to us all. Come, it were wisest to give up arguing, since we are of such decided opinions that nothing can alter them. Let us all part friends as we met, and forget everything except that we are still brothers of the Order, therefore bound to love and *trust* each other; and let us keep our counsel to ourselves."

The cheerful courtesy of Egmont acted like a charm upon the others; and the midnight conclave was dissolved with, at least, every appearance of cordiality; though, perhaps, at the heart of each, with the exception of Count Egmont, whose noble, unsuspicuous nature was confident in everything, there rose a doubt—a suspicion of all else beside himself—of the proceedings of that night especially, most unfavourable to the tardy repose which they at length courted.

PROFESSIONAL MEN.

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

NO. I.—THE BARRISTER.

THE profession of a barrister finds much favour in our eyes. From the heavy expenses attendant upon its adoption, it may not, indeed, be entered upon by any not tolerably well circumstanced; but, on the other hand, it is a profession which will assuredly prove to the clever and painstaking man, who has embraced it, richly fruitful in honour and advantage. Here, at all events, merit may look down upon unworthiness; here, the intellectually-gifted man may survey with complacency any puny-minded but aristocratic rival, competing with him for distinction and emolument. Such antagonist will not succeed here; his wealthy and noble friends may procure for him a living in the church; and inasmuch as he may give over the main labour involved by such living to a couple of curates, to be had upon—oh! such cheap terms, his deficiencies, if not unnoticed, will not interfere with his holding his trust, and his receiving the pecuniary benefit attaching thereto. Or there may be obtained for him a snug government appointment (though these snug government appointments are getting very rare now-a-days), and as he will probably be able to sign a receipt for his salary (he unfortunately cannot be relieved of that trouble; that *cannot* be done by deputy), he may with great comfort retain such appointment unto his life's end. But all the influential and titled supporters in the world cannot make a small-brained and incapable man a prosperous barrister. At the bar, men of ability and legal lore, *only*, can by any chance achieve success. Solicitors dare not give a brief to the Honourable Mr. Augustus Timtdoddy, merely on account of the “Honourable.” If the Honourable Mr. Timtdoddy were connected with the highest family and the most influential and richest personages in the realm, and were inferior in ability to Mr. Jones, the youngest son of John Jones, fishmonger, the latter would be the man who, before the Honourable Augustus, would receive a brief. And we say this circumstance makes us look upon the profession of a barrister with peculiar favour. We contemplate with delight the long list of men who arrived at eminence at the bar, and in many cases attained the bench, who owed their advancement purely to their talents and their industry. It is so at the bar, that the gifted and intelligent *must* win their way. A physician may be a very clever man, but by very slow degrees is his cleverness exhibited, and tardy, therefore, is his progress to renown. The clergyman may be a very learned man and effective preacher, but it will only be by slow degrees likewise that he will arise at a lofty and dignified position. But it can hardly be that the barrister shall be a sound lawyer and a good speaker, and shall not speedily obtain both wealth and distinction. A barrister's talent is not hid like the talent exerted in many other occupations. When a clever counsel

makes a speech, the judge hears it, his fellow-barristers hear it, and (what is vastly more important still) the solicitors in court hear it; and if the speech be undeniably good, and the manifestation of superior ability be unmistakeable, it is a matter of policy to retain this barrister, whoever he may be, aristocrat or plebeian, rich or poor, in future cases, that he may work for other clients the same good result that in all probability his cleverness will achieve for his present. The clergyman who preaches an eloquent discourse, pleases and moves his hearers, but the sensation excited is small compared with that created in a court of law among solicitors, through the delivery by a rising barrister of an effective and powerful speech. Henceforth let not the young man be afraid. He may be mightily independent; he need not seek, for he will be most abundantly sought; the road to fame and fortune lies open before him, and while men equally clever in their professions as doctors or clergymen, will be making, perchance, little way, he—the barrister—may spring forward in an incredibly short space of time to high honour and great affluence.

But while we thus contend for the arena offered by the bar as being admirably adapted for the ambitious man who has talents qualifying him for such a field of action, it is fair we should notice one or two things that may be urged against the profession. In the first place, don't let any gentle youth who has to choose a profession, venture to select that of a barrister, albeit his talents may point that way (if he have no particular ability he will earn more money by sweeping crossings), unless he is prepared to work like a drayhorse. Thriving barristers *do* work like dray-horses. The wear and tear of having to peruse half-a-dozen briefs almost at one time, containing each of them a mass of matter enough to make one's head whirl round—the giving such consideration to each case as is absolutely essential to the understanding the main features—the consultations, crowding one upon another—the arguing, explaining, enforcing each cause, any false move being of vital consequence and damning a man's reputation—notwithstanding the immense number of demands upon his thought and consideration thundered at him from all quarters, render it almost impossible to rivet the attention upon one point even for a few minutes; we say, all these circumstances combined, do most certainly constitute the life of a successful barrister one of most awful labour; and, though his gains may be great—oh, he earns them—earns them to the very last penny.

There is another objection that should be noticed, upon quite a different score. The indiscriminate advocacy of right and wrong—the often so stating a case that counsel appear to be endeavouring to persuade others to an opinion they do not themselves hold—the helping to gain a cause, concerning which there may be a clear conviction in the mind that it is a bad and unjust one; this is unquestionably a nauseous necessity to which the barrister has often to submit. The case is not, however, so bad as some would have it. Lord Brougham's dictum that counsel is called upon to do *anything* for his client; that he is to throw aside every consideration save that of advantaging such client, is utterly, inexpressibly monstrous. There is no such a call upon a counsel; if there were, it would be disgraceful to be a barrister. No; the counsel is bound to do for his client just what that client, if he had the requisite legal knowledge and

ability, might be expected to do for himself, yet without overstepping the bounds of right and fairness. It were, in truth, degrading the profession to a most awful depth to make it compulsory on the "hireling advocate," as the barrister is sometimes politely termed, so to identify himself with his client that he should undertake to do anything, or say anything, for that client that could be regarded as antagonistic to principles of honour and morality. Every fair and legitimate advantage that the advocate can grasp he is bound to seize; he is paid for doing this, and in doing it, he only renders an equivalent for the fee he has received; but that a counsel is called upon to do any mean or dirty action, to have recourse to any trickery or questionable proceeding, merely because his so doing might prove beneficial to the cause of his client, is an untrue assertion calculated infinitely to injure the character of the profession, and to draw down upon it the suspicions and dislike of all upright and honourable men.

Still, as we have said, counsel must indiscriminately advocate, to a certain extent, both right and wrong. They must occasionally—in appearance at all events—back up injustice and fight against equity. And this necessity must ever be, to a sensitive individual, a very disagreeable one. However, if the counsel only bear in mind how far he is required to go in his advocacy of a cause, of the unsoundness of which he may entertain little or no doubt, the difficulties started by conscience will quickly disappear. He is to do all that fairly can be done, he is to say all that fairly can be said, no more; if he go beyond, if he have regard only to winning the day, if he seek to conquer by all methods, no matter how questionable or how opposed to right and equity, then, we say, the barrister lowers himself to a degree saddening to contemplate, and which tends to throw lasting discredit upon a profession which really and truly is a lofty and a noble one.

Ay, a lofty and a noble one; for if he act so that even when supporting wrong, he render no offence to the inward monitor—when by good fortune, he shall be called upon to combat for the right—the counsel may feel a glow within him at the thought of how legitimately he may now employ all his energy, all his power, all his skill, to win a victory. We can envy a barrister into whose hands a good and just cause is entrusted. We can envy the gratification with which he must prepare for the struggle—the heat with which he will strive for success—and the satisfaction with which he may hereafter contemplate the fact that in having won this victory there is a deeper cause for rejoicing than would exist in the mere circumstance of his having added to his list of triumphs. It is a glorious duty the having to advocate the cause of the widow and the fatherless—the desolate and oppressed. It is something to step between the persecutor and the persecuted—and to do battle with a giant's power in a righteous suit. It is something for the eloquent advocate to be called upon to do his best for the weak against the mighty, and to employ his noble talents and lofty energies to bring victory to the right, and cast confusion on the wrong. So that there may be many a bright labour upon which the barrister may look back in after years, and many a thought may recur of most joyful and blessed exercise of abilities and powers. And people may talk of the "hireling advocate," and sneer and say the fervour is bought with money, and that the hope of gain alone excites

the ardour; but we feel sure that where the right is advocated and the wrong denounced, it is a much stronger emotion which animates the vast majority of English barristers,—an earnest and hearty desire to gain a victory, because the victory is for justice and for truth—to inflict a defeat because the opponent is an oppressor and wrong-doer.

The functions of the bench do not give rise to the same excitement and animation engendered by the duties of the bar, but they are of a higher and more exalted order. The occupation of a judge cannot but be regarded by every one with earnest respect and reverence. It stands alone in dignity; an honourable and upright judge is a character than which we cannot conceive a nobler or a loftier. The man who, day by day, brings to bear all the faculties of a superior intellect energetically and perseveringly to the task of applying justice, of detecting falsehood, and of unveiling truth—of raising up the wronged and casting down the evil-doer—who, unmoved by any consideration save that of discovering and establishing the right; and who, nevertheless, when called upon to punish transgressors remembers mercy, only inflicting such penalty as may be necessary to deter others from committing a like offence;—such a man, we say, may well claim, and should ever receive, as much homage as we would pay to any living being. It must be a glorious change from the bar to the bench—from the scene of incessant turmoil and excitement to a position identified with calmness and serenity. For no elaborate displays of eloquence are needed from the judge. Eloquent he may still be, but his eloquence should be of altogether a different order to that in which he delighted at the bar. Fervour there should still be, not fervour to win a cause, but a deep and holy earnestness to exhibit and establish truth. Unmoved by any save righteous motives, unstirred by anything like passion; apart from the conflict, calm, serene, and dignified, the judge should, as it were, simply look down upon the combatants, see the cause of their quarrel, and, without the slightest shadow of bias, plainly set forth that cause divested of all mystification that may have been cast around it; and leave it to the jury to decide the bare question of facts. And a judge who so does his duty, being equally conscientious in his general dealings, may, without quailing, look forward to that coming day, when in a mightier court he himself shall be summoned and his own cause shall be heard.

Upright judges and an enlightened bar, may God ever give us!

JACOB VAN DER NEESS.

A ROMANCE.

BY MADAME PAALZOW.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VAN DER NÉESS, as we have before informed our readers, justly deserved the character of a shrewd, cautious trader. He was quick in discovering the motives and views of those with whom he dealt, and was enabled to give a tolerable exact opinion of the condition and importance of most of the great mercantile houses in Holland, and in the Netherlands, as he had ways and means to spy out even their most secret undertakings; but Van der Néess was a wretched politician; he had caught up some few imperfect notions on the subject of politics; and these he clung to with short-sighted obstinacy, and imagined infallible. It happened that about this period he had contributed a considerable sum towards a Portuguese loan; he received very high interests for this, and deemed it a remarkably judicious measure, especially from its being an underhand proceeding conducted with the strictest secrecy.

But a peace was concluded with Portugal, which suddenly placed this affair in a very dubious light. The payment of the interests ceased altogether, while there was no mention made of the capital, which appeared to be endangered in the financial crisis of that country; and Néess discovered to his infinite alarm, by the manner in which his application was treated, that he had become entangled in an undertaking in which, perhaps, he dared not even confess to have taken part in, and for which, at all events, he could not claim the protection of the States of Holland; for his creditors did not hesitate to ask how, as a burgher of Holland, he could have been induced to supply the foes of that country with money.

As long as this affair continued in regular train, Van der Néess had secretly exulted in his sagacity; he had never troubled himself with any doubts as to its moral admissibility, for he was not given to be scrupulous on that point. Advantage, success, and security, were the only considerations by which he weighed any undertaking.

Van der Néess was perfectly aware that the principal and most respectable capitalists of Amsterdam had refused, with proud disdain, to have anything to do with this affair, of which the managers kept behind the scenes. But he could not appreciate the higher motives by which they were guided, and therefore only congratulated himself on his superior judgment, and entered with malicious exultation into this unsafe and unlawful speculation. Satisfied by the pompous papers that were drawn out, and the ministers' guarantee that he was perfectly safe, he continued for some time to receive the high interests for his capital with infinite delight.

But suddenly the payment ceased. Van der Néess immediately applied to the agents, and the affair appeared at once in its true light. In order to effect the peace, the ministers who had guaranteed this loan were dismissed in disgrace, and all their measures, as far as possible, were thrown upon their own responsibility. Thus the government was wholly exculpated and freed from all obligations regarding what had passed. In

reply to Van der Néess's application, the papers on which he supported his claims were returned to him, without any further consideration; and he was informed that any responsibilities which the former ministers had undertaken, were now to be considered as private transactions, in which the present government could take no interest. Thus it appeared Van der Néess's papers possessed no higher authority than that of the deposed ministers; besides, it was said there was no note of any such loan in the ministerial papers; and thus Mynherr Jacob van der Néess's whole demand was treated as a private affair, for the settlement of which he was referred to the *ei-devant* ministers, who had now become private individuals.

This answer was given with the less hesitation, that the agents were fully conscious of the advantages they had over a burgher capable of supplying the enemies of his country with money during the progress of a war, who, in case he attracted publicity by his complaints, would be considered little better than a traitor to his country. This opinion, as we have hinted before, was pretty clearly expressed in the answer he received, added to a serious warning to keep as quiet as possible in order to avoid attracting attention to his dishonest proceedings, and a compassionate promise to keep his conduct secret from the States of Holland.

Our readers may imagine the effect of this communication upon Van der Néess. The gout seemed suddenly to have left him. He roared and jumped about like a lunatic, unable to form a resolution, and apparently insensible to the pains of the gout. Perhaps this caused them to cease, and reanimated his stiffened limbs, according to the usual process of nature under severe mental agitations.

To his great astonishment, Caas found the bed empty when he came the next morning at the usual hour to dress and lead down his master. The maid was in great alarm, and declared she had never heard anything more terrific than Van der Néess's roaring and howling during the preceding day and night. She stated that he had run about wildly from one coffer to another, and she had heard a great rustling of papers, though she carefully kept out of his way, for he had repeatedly exercised violence against himself, and torn his hair and his clothes; and she would even swear he had jumped on the table, then back to the floor, till everything shook and creaked around him.

He had left the house at dawn of day, without changing his clothes or taking any breakfast; though he had eaten nothing since the morning of the preceding day.

Van der Néess had, too late, learnt the true nature of the transaction in which he was implicated; he now discovered that he was caught in a trap, while, to attempt to escape, was as perilous as to sit still. His lamentable ignorance of political results had led him into this misfortune; but as he would not attribute this blame to his own deficiencies or his insatiable avarice, he vented his rage in curses loud and deep on the ministers, the king, the country, the agents—everything but himself—and at length resolved to repair to Antwerp, where the head agent of the Portuguese minister lived, and make him answerable for his demand.

But he began to suspect something more than mere mercantile calculation was required to conduct affairs of this sort; and though he had always spoken with great contempt of state policy, as a farrago of nonsense, yet he began to think it might be useful to him to know something about it, as he had to deal with those who made it an excuse for

their conduct towards him; and therefore he determined to get some hints on the subject from Cornelius Hooft, who, he thought, must have all that trash at his fingers' end.

To Cornelius Hooft, therefore, Van der Néess repaired, in the frenzied excitement caused by his fears; and his was the first hand that raised the bright knocker of the door, for the sun had just begun to gild the steeples and roofs of the highest houses with its earliest rays.

Cornelius Hooft was a thorough man of the world. After being married three times, he had been left a widower at last, and his only daughter was advantageously settled at the Hague. Since then, Mynherr Cornelius Hooft, who had been raised to the rank of burgomaster, had led the life of an elegant bachelor, surrounded by all the comforts of wealth and refinement. He was nursed and attended by a set of well-schooled domestics, and his house was a model of order and regularity.

The porter, therefore, appeared very indignant at Van der Néess's early summons: and as he did not immediately recognise him, owing to his disordered appearance, refused him admittance, saying that Mynherr Cornelius was engaged at his morning toilette.

A gruff answer from a servant ever had the effect of increasing Van der Néess's rudeness. Thus he would not suffer himself to be repulsed, but became so furious as to outdo even the porter in violence. Owing to the stillness that reigned in the streets at that early hour, the noise of this scuffle resounded all over the house, and at length reached even the luxurious apartment of Mynherr Cornelius, which, draped with green silk hangings, looked into a neat little garden, and was seldom exposed to such interruptions of its peaceful quiet. As Van der Néess in his fury had repeatedly uttered his name, the porter's continued refusals to let him in proceeded rather from the obstinacy natural to servants who have experienced rude treatment, and the wish to procure himself some little satisfaction, by suffering Néess to rage on, than from the fear of disturbing his master, though he did not fail to plead the latter as his excuse, maintaining that such a fellow, as he called him, was not entitled to speak to a burgomaster.

As soon as Cornelius Hooft heard what was going on, the strife, of course, was brought to an end; and Van der Néess darted past the valet, who came to conduct him, and rushed up the polished, carpeted staircase, growling, and shaking himself like a wild animal, till he reached a small parlour adjoining Cornelius's sleeping-room.

A bright fire was blazing in the marble chimney, near which stood a breakfast-table, covered with costly articles of plate and porcelain, and in a rich damask-silk fauteuil sat Mynherr Cornelius, wrapped in a dressing-gown trimmed with fur, and preparing to enjoy the dainties and delicacies of a Dutch breakfast.

Néess burst into the room as if he were pursued, and suddenly stopped before Cornelius. It was impossible to imagine a greater contrast than was offered by these men. The appearance of the one was elegant, gentlemanly, and neat in the extreme; he looked healthy and cheerful, even handsome, for his age. The good-natured expression of his countenance was agreeably enlivened by his bright, expressive eyes; and a slight sarcastic smile played about his lips.

We have attempted to give our readers an idea of Van der Néess's personal appearance and style of dress; but the general effect of all this

was surpassed on the present occasion. It was the first time he had ever incurred any serious loss; one, too, which he was to bear without murmur or complaint. Since the preceding day he had writhed under the influence of the fiercest passions; he had neither eaten, nor slept, nor thought of his attire. Through the violence of his agitation, the power of the gout had been subdued; yet his thoughts were so absorbed by his loss that he never once noticed this. Suffice it to say, Van der Néess's appearance was frightful; and it seemed more natural to imagine him some monster wrapped in men's clothes, than to believe a human being could be thus fearfully disfigured and disguised.

Myherr Cornelius looked at him with unbounded surprise, for, but two days before, he had left him in his armchair a close prisoner with the gout; and though it was not the first time Van der Néess had recovered from such an attack, there was a fearful wildness in his looks which could not fail to attract attention.

"Really, Van der Néess," cried he, "you are very active for a person suffering from the gout. It seems the attack has passed off more quietly than usual, but it is surprising how soon you get on your legs again."

"Ah, don't talk of that," cried Néess; "it is of no consequence. Misfortunes soon give a man the use of his legs. I believe I was as stiff as a poker even yesterday, but that sort of thing must yield to necessity. I never once thought of my legs; they followed of themselves."

"Now, Néess, have you really experienced a misfortune?—that is to say, a misfortune that deserves to be called so? Good God! I hope Floris is well?"

"Floris, Floris!" cried Néess, much irritated that this should be accounted the greatest misfortune. "Floris must now give up all her follies, and cease to play the fine lady; she must lay aside all the airs of her grand relations, and set to work without the assistance of a maid or an errand-boy."

Van der Néess felt a secret pleasure in tormenting Myherr Cornelius with fears regarding his darling, for he well knew his own distress would not much affect the burgomaster.

"Compose yourself, Van der Néess," replied Cornelius at length, in a calm voice; "you have suffered some miserable mischance or other to drive you frantic. As long as Floris is well, you will manage to get over the rest. Here's a chair for you; come, sit down, and take a cup of this good Mocha coffee, instead of your porridge, which, I warrant, was not ready at this early hour."

"Indeed!" cried Van der Néess, striking his fist on the mahogany table with such violence that everything shook upon it. "So, whatever may happen to poor Van der Néess is of no consequence, provided it does not touch that dainty doll, Miss Floris. But this time she won't escape. This time she will have to suffer as well as her poor despised father! This time she will have to go ~~begging~~ along with him, and bear the yoke as well as her poor ruined father!"

Cornelius now grew more attentive.

"Van der Néess," said he, seriously, "lay aside this frantic violence, and speak like a sensible man. Have you suffered any heavy losses? Come, now, compose yourself. You will attract general attention by this manner; and there will be no hope of saving you, if you give way to despair, and thus lose your credit."

This had some effect. Van der Néess paused for a moment, and then said, as he produced the ill-fated papers—

“Look here, my lord burgomaster; examine these papers; then, if you also say they are of no value, Van der Néess will be no better than a beggar; and he may begin again where he was forty years ago—turn porter, carry burdens for others, and let out his warehouses for other people’s goods.”

“You aggravate again, Van der Néess,” said Mynherr Cornelius. “Let us see, man, what you have there; a sly old fox like you is not likely to be out in his reckoning.”

“Ah! if it were but a matter of common calculation,” shrieked Van der Néess, relapsing in his old despair. “But this—ha! this is more in your line, though it is a trick of the devil’s devising. It surpasses my powers of calculation. There! read—read, and say whether there is any escape or help for a poor honest man, whom a set of infernal wretches have conspired to rob and ruin, like so many highwaymen and pick-pockets.”

But Mynherr Cornelius had no sooner glanced at the contents of the papers, than he pushed away the inviting breakfast-table with some impetuosity; his countenance suddenly changed, the veins on his forehead swelled high, and betrayed his rising passion, while his eyes flashed with indignation.

Without reading to the end, he threw the papers from him, with an air of horror and disgust, and, rushing up to Van der Néess, with a sudden impulse of passion, he cried—

“Is it possible that you are implicated in this dirty, disgraceful transaction, miserable, treacherous usurer that you are? To secure the pitiful interests, which the meanest money-changer in our money-market spurned from him, because it dishonoured him, you have entered into—a speculation for which you deserve the halter! Do you know,” cried he, with increasing wrath, “that you have not only acted like a rascal, but like a fool—like a poor, miserable fool? You have suffered yourself to be overreached like a silly schoolboy, and made yourself a laughing-stock for your adversaries!”

“Overreached!” shrieked Van der Néess, wringing his hands; “overreached did you say? But these papers—these great names—these ministers—these securities?”

“Silly, wretched usurer!” cried Mynherr Cornelius, quite beside himself with rage, “you deserve to be kicked out of my house!” He threw the papers furiously on the ground. “Bah! they contaminate the place where they lie. Do you know that, if I choose to betray you, you would be turned out of the merchants’ guild, and come under the power of the law, to be branded as a common traitor to your country, and then rewarded with the halter?”

Van der Néess started back a few steps; his knees tottered.

“Turned out of the guild, my lord burgomaster!—and a beggar! And is all this worth nothing?” he shrieked, suddenly, and in mortal agony threw himself on the ground beside his papers.

“Worth so much,” cried Mynherr Cornelius, “that you may thank your God if I take these papers with the tongs, and throw them into this fire, in order to efface all evidence of your treacherous guilt! Ha! fellow! why did you come hither to make me your confidant in your villainy?”

Don't you know that it would be my duty to seize these papers, and deliver them up to the great tribunal of commerce?"

With a savage yell, Van der Néess threw himself upon the scattered papers, and hastily collected them.

He quaked with fear and alarm at the harsh words of Mynherr Cornelius, who was generally so mild and forbearing, without, however, feeling conscious of the shameful part he had acted.

"Oh, noble sir!" cried he, in a cringing tone, "is it possible that all this is as you say? Good God! have mercy upon me!—and yet, what have I done? Is not every measure allowable in trade that is safe and advantageous? How, then have I sinned so grossly in making a loan such as great states often make to each other?"

Cornelius suddenly gazed at him—the thought flashed across his mind that perhaps this man was unable to judge of the extent of his crime. The comparison he had made use of sounded like the short-sighted jargon of a common usurer, who considers duty to his country, patriotic virtue, and honour, as mere hollow, high-sounding terms, to which no one attaches any serious importance.

"Van der Néess," said the noble-minded Hooft, at length, in a more composed tone, "it is hard to say whether you are more knave or fool. What you have said just now is pure nonsense, and for your honour I will strive to think you have been only a fool. But it is your despicable avarice that has made you so great a fool, and you are now justly punished for yielding to it. Have not I often warned you not to meddle with politics? Confine yourself to petty usury and small traffic—that is your field, and there you will always reap your profits; but you have not enough of general knowledge to enter into more important transactions, and you ever were a fool with regard to politics. Have you ever heard of such a thing as the States of Holland countenancing a loan which was to benefit the country with which they were engaged in war? Would not that be casting the balls that were to be fired off at ourselves? Can't you understand that?"

"Yes, yes; I understand it," cried Van der Néess. "I do understand it! But there is nothing of all this in these papers—not a word; this is a different thing altogether."

"If you supplied the country which was at war with Holland with money to prosecute that war, you did the same thing, and proved yourself a traitor, who, according to law and justice, should die on the gallows!"

"Gracious God! you would not?" shrieked Van der Néess, flinging himself on his knees before Hooft. "Oh, have mercy on me! Great God, I am a beggar already! A beggar! and you yet talk of punishment!—of the gallows! All is lost—all! The treasure I have so fondly hoarded—Angela's fortune—all—all gone! Noble burgomaster, think of Floris—of your darling—what will become of her? Think of her if—Ha! if you send her father to the gallows! Good God, I do not know what to say!"

Cornelius turned from him with feelings of utter loathing. His heart was ready to burst with indignation; but Van der Néess had artfully touched the right chord to move him. The thought of Floris disarmed him, and he began to consider what could be done to save Van der Néess, at least from public shame.

The latter instantly perceived the advantage he had gained. Mynherr Cornelius turned towards a window to recover his composure; as he contemplated the flourishing shrubs in his garden, the fragrant flowers, the hallowed repose and beautiful regularity of nature, he shuddered to think of the fearful state of degradation into which man alone can sink by his own free will when once he breaks loose from the control of his Holy Protector. The innocence and perfection of nature inspired Cornelius with the deepest pity for those who were under the influence of guilt and sin; his eye grew moist, and he inwardly breathed a prayer to God for assistance in this difficulty.

When he turned round he saw Van der Néess standing before him with an air of abject humility, holding the ill-fated papers in his hands.

"God knows whether I act aright in lending a helping-hand to conceal your crime," said Mynherr Cornelius; "but listen to me: I will do so only on one condition,—that you do not cross this threshold ere every one of these papers, which prove your guilt, be consumed by the flames in this grate."

Néess started back with a frantic gesture.

"Gracious God!" he shrieked. "What! burn all these documents, bonds, receipts—things as good as ready money, drawn out by the government of a kingdom? Burn all this in a fire, did you say?—lose all? You—you don't mean to say you think all this is worthless? Can't you help me, then, to recover my money—my own, and my Floris's fortune?"

"That's quite out of the question," returned Cornelius; "these documents have, either through inadvertence or design, been drawn up in such a manner as to impose no obligations on the succeeding ministers. The answer you have received might, I think, have convinced you of this. You have been informed that the minister considers this loan altogether as a private affair of his predecessors, since no mention is even made of any such loan in the financial registers of the former ministry, and especially as the papers you have forwarded in support of your claims are utterly destitute of any official character. Mark, therefore, the government refuses to acknowledge your claims, and so does the minister with whom you treated. He naturally declares your demand to be a debt of the government with which he has no concern, and there also he is in the right. But both parties are encouraged to treat you thus harshly, by the certainty that you dare not complain of them, nor apply to the States of Holland to procure you redress, though they would do so in any other case, because this whole transaction was an act of treachery towards these States. Do not you feel how contemptuously you are treated, and with what coldness and indifference the whole affair is spoken of? Our enemies may, indeed, love treason, but they will ever despise the traitor; and your stupidity and avarice have now placed you in this predicament."

"And yet," growled Néess, in a tone of dogged resolution, thrusting the papers in his bosom, "and yet I will not burn them. I shall not rest till I have my money; and if you will not assist me, I shall bid you farewell. You have sufficiently insulted me: go—you are a false friend; and your proud ideas and subtle distinctions teach you to affront those who are inferior to you. But, for all that, I shall find ways to enforce my rights. I am not the only person who has done such things in this

city; and now we must stand by each other. As to the States, I laugh at them; their ways are often crooked enough. No; I am not such a novice as you think me. Go! feed your fire with something else. I shall yet coin this combustible material into gold!"

Thus saying, he rushed furiously towards the door. Mynherr Cornelius caught him by the arm, and detained him for another minute.

" You are too much excited, and too unreasonable, ever to get yourself out of this difficulty; but, 'mark my words, if anything of this affair should transpire at the money-markets, or the town-hall, or anywhere, I shall denounce you, and demand your punishment. Floris will then be taken from you, and consigned to the guardianship of the chief burgomaster, and give up your name. You know that we possess the power to act thus, and I shall enforce it if the slightest hints of this disgraceful affair should get abroad.

" But I," shrieked Van der Néess, " forbid you to enter my house. Come, if you dare, and demand Floris; I shall teach you to remember Van der Néess as long as you live. If you will treat me like a wild beast, you shall learn what the bear will become if you attempt to rob him of his cub. And now my sweet and mighty sir guardian, now your petted wax-doll, who hitherto could wear nothing but silks and gauzes, forsooth! shall learn what it is to have a beggar for a father! She shall suffer for it now—so she shall—and if it were only to torment you."

With a furious jerk he freed himself from Cornelius's grasp, and, pushing him aside, rushed out of the room with a frantic yell.

After a few minutes, Mynherr Cornelius's valet looked in, much alarmed, and expressed great delight on seeing his master quite safe, for Van der Néess's frightful agitation and savage look, as he darted down stairs and out of the house, had inspired the domestics with the fear that he had committed some violence on their master.

Van der Néess, in the mean while, collected his scattered thoughts to find some means of escape. He took his way to the most disreputable part of the town, entered haunts of the most equivocal character, and held consultation with persons who dared not show their faces on the Exchange, but were ready to transact for others all affairs that shunned the light.

Through these persons Van der Néess sought to apply once more to the agents at Antwerp, who belonged to the same class of disreputable and proscribed members of the commercial world; and, spurred on by despair, he even resolved, in case this application should lead to no result, to set out in person for the court of Portugal, where he hoped he should be able more openly and boldly to assert his claims. Somewhat comforted by the assurances of these wretched accomplices, Van der Néess hurried home about noon. But the peaceful appearance of this home, with its comforts and its little luxuries, drove him to a new fit of despair. He was seized with fierce and bitter anger at the thought that up to that moment he alone was suffering, while no one in his house had as yet experienced any mortification or distress.

He hastened with a species of demoniacal delight to the place where his unsuspecting child was seated to destroy the peace she yet enjoyed. In the tumult of his feelings he hated even Floris, who, pale and sad, was gazing at the flowers in her court, and striving to interest herself in their

charms, and bury among them those sweet hopes which had enticed her to wander so far from them for the last two days.

Van der Néess glanced at her for a moment through a crevice in the door, and, enraged at her unconscious calmness, he called down a fearful curse even upon her head, and then burst into the court with fierce impetuosity, hoping thus at one blow to destroy her peaceful repose.

"In the name of Heaven what is the matter!" cried Floris, when she saw him rush up to her in the greatest alarm. "I did not know that any accident had occurred to you."

"An accident!" cried Néess, fiercely; "an accident do you call it? Fool! proud haughty fool!" he shrieked, rudely pushing her away from him. "Is it an accident that your father is become a beggar? Is it only an accident in your opinion that your father must take to carrying burdens in his old age, and Mynherr Caas live like a gentleman in comparison to him; —an accident—an accident! No! you will be the first to feel the consequences of the accident. Away! away! with all this finery; away with all those useless traps in the house and court. Your dresses must go to the haberdasher's; your flowers must be rooted up, and exchanged for bread —ay, for bread! I shall have the house cleared out even to-day. I shall have all the plate, the carpets, beds, utensils, ornaments, and all your follies, wherewith you have ruined your father, thrown together in a heap —and I shall send for the pawnbrokers, and those who deal in such trippery, and they shall carry off all this for bread—yes, girl, for bread I say —for bread, which your father has no longer the means to buy! And you, with your soft hands and smooth face, must henceforward learn to scrub and cook, for I can no longer afford to feed useless wenches and idle lackeys. As to Mynherr Caas, that grand gentleman, he shall find the walls too high, and the doors too thick, to admit him here. My precious young lady no longer requires a footman; she must learn to fetch home the dry bread herself, which will henceforth be our only fare."

Van der Néess might have said more, Floris would not have interrupted him, paralysed with horror, and suddenly aroused from her soft reverie to a reality more frightful than anything her imagination could have pictured. She at once perceived what was actually the case—her father really hated her; and as he jumped about before her, in the transports of his rage, his eyes darting forth glances of bitter hatred, she trembled for her life.

Poor Floris did not know that it was her immovable silence that drove him to such a state of frenzy; he was enraged at being unable to render her as despairing as he was himself, for this would have given him some satisfaction.

Perhaps only the timely appearance of Caas and the maid saved her from actual ill-usage; on them, Van der Néess vented his long-suppressed fury, and overwhelmed them with blows and cuffs, as many as they would bear, though not without receiving some in return, till finally he turned them out of the house without further ceremony. Poor Floris's terror, when she found herself alone with her father, was so fearful, that she threw herself at his feet, and cried, in a faltering voice, "For Heaven's sake, father, do not kill me! Let me not die by your hands."

This satisfied Van der Néess; he felt he had rendered her as wretched as he could wish. He then recommenced his description of the life she was to lead thenceforth; and, with savage joy, annihilated all the inno-

cent pleasures of his trembling child. When, at length, the picture was complete, even to the minutest particulars—it was but a fac-simile of the life to which he had doomed Grôneveldt's widow and daughter—he turned, with brutal satisfaction, to the remembrance of that wretched state of things, and fell back at once to the point where he was twenty years before. Angela's indefatigable exertions had been unable to change his disposition. Though he had for some time appeared a different person, this change was merely owing to the circumstances in which he was placed, and to which he submitted against his own will and inclination, as an inevitable necessity ; and Van der Néess was once more a low, grovelling miser—a misanthrope, who looked with bitterness and envy on all mankind—a merciless tyrant, who loved to revel in his fierce passions. And in thus giving way to his old nature, he seemed to feel a sort of demoniacal satisfaction at being released from the constraint of years.

Floris felt so utterly and hopelessly wretched—so stunned and stupefied at all she heard and saw—that Van der Néess met with no obstacle in giving full play to the horrible disposition which had been newly awakened within him. At length he started up, and rushed into the house, with the intention of despoiling the apartments of all the articles he had threatened to sell. He announced this to Floris, commanding her to stay where she was, and on no account to open the door to any one. He then repaired to the old banqueting-room, to begin his devastating course there, and locked the door behind him after he had entered. When Floris heard the lock turn, she uttered a heavy groan, and sank, fainting from her seat, on the ground.

Meanwhile Caas, who was convinced Van der Néess had lost his senses, and feared he would kill Floris, after soothing the screaming handmaiden, had hurried to Cornelius Hooft, to implore his aid in rescuing his poor, defenceless mistress.

Mynherr Cornelius had not been idle since Van der Néess left him. He had taken secret measures to discover whether any reports were as yet in circulation about Van der Néess, and had the satisfaction of ascertaining that nothing of this affair had as yet transpired, and, consequently, his accomplices seemed to be more prudent than he himself, and conscious of the risk they ran. He felt rather uneasy about Floris, and he was debating with himself whether he was called upon to attach any importance to Van der Néess's prohibition of his entering the house, as he longed to give the poor girl the protection of his presence, when Caas was announced. The poor fellow's distress was so visibly imprinted on his countenance that Cornelius started up in affright, and urged him to speak, scarce allowing him to recover his breath.

When Caas had delivered his faithful report, Cornelius no longer doubted that Van der Néess had lost his senses ; and the thought of poor Floris being utterly in the power of this maniac so terrified him, that, scarcely waiting to put on his cap and cloak, he hurried through the streets even faster than Caas.

The latter followed, with Hooft's valet ; but when they arrived in front of the old house, all attempts to procure admittance were fruitless. They knocked loudly at the doors, and threw pebbles at the windows. All in vain. The iron gate, as well as the doors of the house and of the

court of business, were locked, and, after the closest investigation, they could discover no sign of life.

At length Caas lost all patience, and determined to climb over the high walls of the court of pleasure. In spite of its height, he accomplished this feat, by mounting on Mynherr Cornelius's shoulders; but no sooner had he reached the top of the wall, whence he could look down into the court of pleasure, than he uttered a loud cry.

The poor fellow fancied he saw his worst apprehensions fulfilled, for Floris, who had received a slight hurt in falling from her seat, still lay motionless on the spot where we left her, her dress stained with blood.

"He has murdered her!" cried Caas, in despair. "He has murdered her; she lies weltering in her blood!"

Thus saying, he jumped from the high wall, and fell, half stunned, into Floris's soft flower-beds. His first impulse was to rush up to Floris. At the same moment,

"No, no!" cried Mynherr Cornelius, in joyful accents. "Heaven be praised, she is not dead, nor is she severely wounded; it is only a fainting-fit. But, God, God! who can tell what she may have undergone? I swear, by the God of Heaven, 'tis the last time she shall suffer in this house. She shall not be left any longer in the power of this monster, Van der Néess, who does not deserve the name of a human being."

Caas hastened to summon back the maid, whom Jacob had so rudely chased. Mynherr Cornelius then took Floris up in his arms, and carried her to her bedroom, where he left her to the care of this maid. Her consciousness slowly returned, though she could not immediately recall what had happened; but when Mynherr Cornelius approached the bedside, she immediately recognised him, and rewarded his anxious inquiries with one of her sweetest smiles.

"Rest and quiet will be the best things for her," said he, as he turned away. "She must be left in peace to collect her thoughts." And having given some directions to her maid regarding the treatment of her patient, he descended to the lower part of the house, to ascertain what was become of Van der Néess.

Finding the door of the old banqueting-room locked, he and Caas explored all the other apartments, in hopes of discovering him; but as their search proved fruitless, the idea flashed on their minds that he must be shut up there.

Encouraged by Mynherr Cornelius, Caas and the valet broke open the door with a hatchet. The first thing that met their gaze was the miser's heavy money-chest, which, as we have said, was placed in a recess of the wall, and secured by a door lined with iron. But on the present occasion both the door and the chest were open. Cornelius no longer doubted that Van der Néess would be found here.

As he advanced farther into the apartment, his conjectures were confirmed, for Van der Néess was lying on the ground, between the great oaken table and the strong-box. But he was not alone; another form lay prostrate half across his back. It was poor old Susa.

Cornelius shuddered, and started back a few paces. He at once suspected what, on closer investigation, proved to be the case,—THEY WERE BOTH DEAD!

An impenetrable darkness rested on their fate. Susa, who had grown

quite childish, had for years taken up her abode in the chimney corner of this apartment; here she would dream away her days in harmless inactivity, unconscious of all around her, except the presence of Floris, whose little hand she would often press to her lips, and that of Van der Néess. Her hatred for him was become a sort of instinctive feeling, for she had always known him from any one else, and on his appearance would mutter between her lips the word "Robber," which she yet remembered, and throw anything at him which she happened to have in her hand; nay, on one occasion, when he ventured to tease her, and approached somewhat too close to her, she angrily caught hold of him by his hair, and scratched his face so fearfully that he was disfigured for many days.

The most natural conclusion was that Van der Néess, under the influence of his excitement, had forgotten old Susa's presence, and locked her up with himself in the apartment. Probably some new ebullitions of rage, such as he was wont to indulge in when left to himself after any great agitation, had attracted her attention, and aroused her from her stupor, for all the chairs and tables were displaced, and this led to the supposition of some disturbance.

A fit of apoplexy had evidently seized them both, but it was impossible to guess how the struggle had arisen between them which seemed to have preceded it. Van der Néess had dragged a bag of gold out of his iron chest, and part of its contents lay scattered around him. Susa also grasped a piece of gold in the hand that was now closed in death. But the most remarkable thing was, that the unlucky papers which Van der Néess intended to coin into gold were torn to pieces; some bits were found in Susa's hands, and others in Van der Néess's, while the remainder lay in fragments around them.

Mynherr Cornelius ordered old Susa's body to be carried to a sofa. He gazed at her sunken features with feelings of respect and emotion. "Poor faithful creature," cried he, "even in thy last moments thou hast unconsciously struggled for the honour of the family to whose service thou hast devoted thy whole life, and, as if thou hadst been aware of the ignominy these papers would entail, thou hast destroyed them, perhaps, at the price of thy life!"

Van der Néess's countenance bore a frightful expression—even in death the traces of his fierce passions were still imprinted there, and it seemed natural enough that an attack of apoplexy should be the consequence of such fearful agitations as he had undergone.

Cornelius caused all the fragments of paper, as well as the scattered gold, to be collected, and having locked them away in the strong-box, possessed himself of the key.

His next care was to communicate the terrible catastrophe which so fearfully terminated the tragedy acted in the ill-fated house, to Floris, with every imaginable precaution.

On returning to her, he found her so pale and weak that he would not hazard giving her any hint of what had taken place. He obtained a promise that she would not leave her room till his return on the following morning; and replied, to her anxious inquiries regarding her father, that he had been seized by a fresh attack of the gout, and after being put to bed by Caas, had fallen asleep. Floris appeared so much relieved by this answer, that Cornelius no longer felt any uneasiness in leaving her.

He had sent for the coroner and undertaker, and charged his servants to make the necessary arrangements as speedily as possible ; thus he had the satisfaction ere night to find every preparation made, and the two corpses laid out in their coffins, and placed on trestles beside each other, in the great banqueting-room.

Myrherr Cornelius fell into a deep and painful reverie as he gazed on these two lifeless forms, united in death after an enmity that had begun with the first day of their acquaintance, and continued inveterate to the last moment of their existence. An impenetrable mystery must ever rest on their latter end : yet it seemed but too likely that the last and greatest effort of this enmity had been to cause the annihilation of its object. But here, now, Van der Néess was forced to endure the presence of his enemy in silence. By a strange fatality, the scene of his fearful injustice—of his wicked oppression—and his wretched and tyrannical conduct over those who were entrusted to his care—had become also the scene of his death ; at the moment, too, when he was preparing to plunge once more into the career of vice he had ever looked back to with regret, while he had breathed out his sordid spirit over the source of all his crimes—his gold.

“ Oh,” cried Myrherr Cornelius, with great emotion, “ is not this a just retribution ? How clearly we may trace the justice of Heaven even in this life, if we do not wilfully blind ourselves to the ways of Providence. Almighty Father ! even on earth Thou art a just and righteous Judge ! Woe to him who does not understand Thee. If he attempts to set Thy justice at defiance, he will soon be at variance with Thy providence, hate the world, feel enmity towards his brethren, and continue obdurate in presumption and sin to the end of his miserable existence ! ”

After this short funeral discourse, which Myrherr Cornelius involuntarily pronounced to the memory of Jacob Van der Néess, he turned away : and we shall follow his example, and turn, from the painful reflections such a character suggests, to his heiress.

Cornelius Hooft did not fail to pay his visit to poor Floris as early as possible on the ensuing morning, and as he found her much strengthened by her night’s rest, though still very pale and sad, he proposed her coming down to the court of pleasure, and breakfasting with him in the fresh air.

He left her to give the necessary orders to this effect, and then waited at the bottom of the stairs. He was greatly affected at seeing her descend with a slow and cautious step, as if fearful of disturbing her father, while she seemed oppressed by some painful presentiment. On reaching the landing-place she threw herself into his arms, and with tears in her eyes inquired in a trembling voice for her father.

“ He is sleeping,” said Cornelius, in a subdued voice, as he led her past the door of the old banqueting-room where Van der Néess was, indeed, taking his last sleep.

Hooft wished to keep her in the dark till she had partaken of some nourishment, and been fortified by the fresh morning air for the painful and agitating tidings that awaited her.

But Floris was unable to enjoy the beauty of the morning ; the oppression of her heart became more painful every moment. In obedience to her old friend she sat down under the balmy shade of the lime-tree, and attempted to partake of the breakfast he had prepared for her, but

her breath came thick and short ; she started at the slightest noise in the house, and when Caas at length made his appearance, with a woful countenance, on which he vainly sought to force a smile, she could contain herself no longer, and bursting into tears, she cried—

“ For Heaven’s sake tell me what has happened ? I feel some dreadful misfortune has occurred.”

At that moment she saw her mother’s old friend, Mynherr Harsens, appear at the door leading from the hall ; she hastened to meet him, repeating in a faltering voice—

“ Tell me, I beseech you, what has happened ? Where—oh ! where is my father ?”

“ He sleeps the sleep of ages,” replied Mynherr Harsens, in a mild voice. “ The burden of earthly temptations which rendered him so miserable and so unhappy has been taken from him. Come, my poor child, let us pray beside his coffin.”

Floris paid her father the full tribute of filial affection ; she seemed to have forgotten whatever could prejudice this feeling, and was so utterly disconsolate at the idea of his having parted from her in anger, that she had need of all her confidence in her old preceptor, Mynherr Harsens, to believe his assurance that no lasting reproach or irretrievable offence attached to her thereby.

She was so engrossed by the painful feelings this idea called forth, that the news of Susa’s death made less impression on her than would otherwise have been the case, though it increased the sense of loneliness that had stolen over her sad heart.

Cornelius was unable to fulfil his intention of taking Floris away immediately from this house of mourning, for she insisted on keeping watch beside the dead bodies of her father and her old nurse. As she knelt beside the coffin of the former, her oppressed heart found relief in a flood of bitter tears, and the fervent prayers she addressed for him to the almighty Disposer of events deeply moved her sympathising friends.

“ Verily,” said Mynherr Cornelius, when, at length, the fierce expression of Jacob’s features relaxed in death, and the wrinkles of his brow gradually faded away, “ it would almost seem as if her prayers had brought him forth from hell, and this unhappy sinner had found mercy in the sight of his offended Judge for the sake of his angelic child.”

“ God’s mercy is great,” replied Mynherr Harsens, mildly.

When the remains of these last inhabitants of the old house of the Purmurands had been consigned to their eternal resting-places, Floris left the abode of her parents with Harsens and Cornelius Hooft, to repair to her aunt, who with maternal tenderness offered her a home.

Hooft proceeded to take an inventory of Van der Néess’s effects. He received active assistance in this task from Harsens, who had become a celebrated preacher, and was then in the enjoyment of an excellent living.

No evidence could be found of the sums Van der Néess had contributed to the Portuguese loan beyond the very unsatisfactory bonds and papers which had been destroyed in his last struggle with Susa. The two gentlemen could not help shuddering as they consigned these fragments to the flames ; but they discovered that almost the whole of the usurer’s hoarded treasure was thus consumed thereby. This fact, which he could

not conceal from himself, must have rendered his last hours hopelessly wretched, while the agonies he had suffered in consequence, and the fearful agitation of his brain, had finally caused his death.

The treasure for which he had sinned so grievously, dooming himself and others to sorrow and misery, vanished from his grasp in the last hours of his life; and the curse of Gröneveldt, which his terrified imagination had caused him so often to hear, had at length laid him prostrate on the very spot where once he solemnly swore to protect the widow, and the orphan, and to watch faithfully over their fortune, and where soon after he broke that solemn oath.

The sale of the old house and of Angela's jewels, added to the ready money found in Van der Néess's strong-box, produced a moderate sum, which Cornelius put out to interest, and which, at all events, would preserve Floris from absolute poverty.

By Angela's will, Mynherr van Marseeven had been named chief guardian to Floris; but after his wife's death he had retired from the government, and set out for Venice, where one of his daughters was established, and, in consequence of his absence, all the duties devolved on the other two guardians, Hooft and Harsens, who fulfilled their trust with scrupulous exactness. Cornelius even made an attempt to recover some part of Jacob's loan to the Portuguese government; but his exertions proved utterly fruitless, for the reasons we have before stated.

Floris continued to live with her aunt. In the society of this beloved relative she gradually recovered from the varied and painful agitations she had sustained. Undisturbed by the influence of domestic sufferings, the noble qualities of her mind had full opportunity to develop themselves; and, under Urica's judicious guidance, her understanding became cultivated, and her views enlarged.

Thus time rolled on. But during the course of the ensuing winter Urica's strength gradually decayed, and her anxious friends could no longer conceal from themselves that her dissolution was approaching. She was evidently aware of her situation, for all her plans and arrangements bore reference to her approaching death.

It was her desire that Floris should take up her abode with the Harsens after this event, in preference to entering into the family of the Marseevens, since the moderate sum she had inherited from Van der Néess would not enable her to live in the style to which she would grow accustomed in the burgomaster's house, and Urica felt great doubts as to whether her own original fortune would ever pass into Floris's hands. Owing to the improvement of his circumstances, Harsens now lived in a very comfortable and elegant manner, though he kept clear of ostentation and extravagance; and as his two daughters were married, he consented with pleasure to take charge of Floris, who, on her part, offered no objection to the wishes of her aunt.

Spring returned once more, but Urica's weakness increased with every day, and she expressed her fears that she should not live to see Lord Fawcett's return. She still felt great uneasiness with regard to his love for Floris. Mynherr Cornelius was a bad counsellor. To let the young people marry and be happy was the best plan, in his opinion, for he could not bear to see Floris look pale and melancholy, and would have gone to the ends of the earth to procure for her the object of her wishes.

Harsens, Urica's second counsellor, was too little acquainted with the circumstances to pronounce an opinion; yet he remarked that a mutual inclination was indispensable to the happiness of both parties in marriage, and, where this was known to exist, there might perhaps be serious harm done in preventing a union.

Mynherr van Marseeven's advice would have had most influence with Urica, as she had great confidence in his experience and knowledge of human nature; but she was deprived of this assistance, as he had not then returned from Italy.

Meanwhile, the letters she received from Lord Fawcett, and the accounts she heard of him through other channels, created a beneficial interruption to these anxieties.

He seemed to have cast off the indolence of his nature, and entered with energy on the duties of life. He had acquitted himself of his mission to general satisfaction, and spoke much of the delight with which he anticipated his return.

When Urica received these welcome letters, and marked with approbation the healthy tone of mind they indicated, she would often fall into a musing mood.

"Why should not I trust him?" thought she, at length. "Why should I interfere with his happiness, when I see that the faults that have so lately occasioned me sorrow and solicitude are now yielding to the powerful influence of manly energy and noble, undaunted resolution?"

Sometimes she would show these letters to Floris, and when the latter had read their contents over and over again, she would fix an earnest inquiring glance on Urica; and though neither of them spoke, Floris's youthful heart beat high, for she read sweet comfort in that gentle affectionate look of her aunt.

• About this time, also, Urica heard of the death of the old Countess of Kilmaine. "Another obstacle removed," she thought, and she gazed with deep emotion at Floris; animated by new hopes, the lovely girl sat at her feet lost in a pleasing reverie. Urica could not behold her without emotion, and began to hope with her, that all the fears that had formerly influenced her decision might be dissipated.

At length Van Marseeven returned: Urica was no longer able to leave her bed; infinitely relieved by his presence, she confided to him all her fears and anxieties, her wishes and determinations, regarding the darling of her heart; and as she trusted implicitly in his judgment, she left the decision of Floris's fate in his hands.

Van Marseeven saw that Urica's hours were numbered, and therefore wrote off immediately to press Lord Fawcett's return.

But she did not live to see him again. Her pure spirit winged its flight from this world of trials; and as her sorrowing friends gazed on the sainted repose of her beautiful features, they felt that in this instance death had lost its sting.

Ulla, Urica's faithful domestic, anxious to pay a last tribute of respect to her departed mistress, insisted on being permitted to arrange the chamber of death. On the following day she summoned Urica's mourning relations. A number of young orange-trees in blossom had been placed around the room, and filled the air with their fragrant perfume. An open coffin was placed in the midst, surrounded with moss and flowers,

which contained Urica's beautiful form. A loose robe of white silk descended to her feet, and her delicate white hands were folded on her bosom; but the mysterious ring of the Casamborts no longer sparkled on her finger. Van Marseeven had solemnly delivered it to Floris, now the eldest and the last of the Casambort family, and placed it on the little finger nature seemed to have formed for its reception.

For years no eye had seen the luxuriance of Urica's beautiful hair; but now it was parted on her forehead, and fell around her like a golden mantle, while a diadem of rubies, which she had worn at her first marriage, graced her snowy brow. Her classic features, exquisitely lovely even in death, beamed with a smile of peace and happiness.

Floris and her surviving friends gazed in speechless admiration at this beautiful picture of death; they knelt down in solemn meditation, and their sorrow was turned into devotion.

At that moment a hasty footstep was heard advancing. Floris trembled. Lord Fawcett stood among the mourners.

"Alas!" he exclaimed, in a tone of the bitterest grief, "I am too late!"

"Not too late to pray with us," said Harsens—"not too late to read with us in the radiant countenance of this blessed one the certainty of the heavenly felicity that has fallen to her share! You have lost her for this world my young friend, but she has left you her blessing; and her pure spirit, no longer confined by earthly bounds, found comfort for this temporal separation, in the confident hope of an eternal reunion. May that hope also have a soothing influence on you."

When the first tumult of feeling had subsided, Harsens read prayers over the body, and Hooft and Van Marseeven succeeded in persuading Lord Fawcett, who was utterly absorbed by his grief, to quit the chamber of death.

After the interment of the corpse, Floris took up her residence with the Harsens, according to her aunt's desire; and the kind solicitude of her old preceptor and his excellent wife, soon made her feel at home in their comfortable dwelling. After the first weeks of mourning were past, during which nothing had occurred to disturb the unreserved meetings of the young people, Lord Fawcett acquainted Floris's chief guardian, Mynheer van Marseeven, with his sentiments towards her, and requested permission to address her. Van Marseeven heard this proposal without any signs of surprise, and told Lord Fawcett he had foreseen his intention, and should make no objection if Floris consented; but he made a point of acquainting the young earl with the precarious state of Floris's affairs, and proved that unless the claims were attended to which, in virtue of her aunt, she was entitled to make on the King of England, he would receive a portionless bride.

Lord Fawcett seemed relieved from a weight by this communication; he delighted to think that his beloved Floris would henceforward receive everything from him, and the dirty gains of the miser no longer adhere to her person.

After some consultation on the subject, Van Marseeven and the other guardians decided that the time had arrived for making use of the document which entitled Floris to assume the rank of Countess van Casambort.

The chief burgomaster represented that it would be advantageous by placing her more on a level with the proud family into which she was about to enter, and further might assist her claims on Charles II., by proving her right to succeed Urica in all her prerogatives; while, on the other hand, there was no one now living who could be wounded by her change of name.

He then proceeded to acquaint Floris with the existence of this document, and all the reasons which had prevented its being sooner put into force. Floris heard him with infinite surprise, and at first expressed great reluctance to change her name, as she deemed it a slight to the memory of her parents. But Van Marseeven proved to her that the grounds of Angela's former objections no longer existed, and as she had implicit faith in his judgment, she finally yielded to his advice, and assumed the title of Countess van Casambort.

When Lord Fawcett informed his beloved that he had received Van Marseeven's permission to address her, she no longer doubted that Urica had finally revoked the decision which had caused her and Henry so much pain. Time and absence seemed but to increase their mutual affection; and now that this great obstacle to their happiness was removed, the young Countess van Casambort no longer kept her lover in suspense, and as his duties demanded his return to London, she consented to his wishes for a speedy union.

Lord Fawcett took Caas into his service, and on perceiving his shrewdness and intelligence, and the good use he had made of the opportunities afforded him by the chief burgomaster, he promoted him to the office of his secretary, and thus gratified the poor fellow's utmost ambition.

On the day before the young countess's marriage, Van Marseeven was both surprised and gratified to receive an official despatch containing a cheque on the Bank of England for a part of Urica's loan, and a promise for the payment of the rest in regular instalments from Charles II.'s private fortune.

As the death of Urica was still too recent to admit of any public ceremony, the young Countess van Casambort was united to the Earl of Fawcett at an early hour of the morning, by her old preceptor, Mynherr Harsens, in the presence of all her surviving friends. After she had gone through the painful task of bidding them farewell, she embarked with Lord Fawcett on board a vessel held in readiness for him, and set sail for her new country.

As the shores of Holland receded from their view, Lord Fawcett glanced proudly at the beautiful girl who had so confidingly entrusted her happiness to his keeping; and as he pressed her fervently to his bosom, he swore to prove himself worthy of her love, and to justify the opinion she had formed of him.

DRAFTS FROM MEMORY ON THE BANKS OF HOLLAND.

BY MRS. WHITE.

No sooner does the voyager to the Netherlands lose sight of New Dieppe, with its arsenal and shipping, than he finds himself upon the confines of a land utterly unlike any other he has visited, and without its counterpart on the map of Europe. Now and then, on one side or the other, he perceives, starting, as it were, from the yellow waters of the Zuider-Zee, a cluster of trees, a church-spire, or a group of buildings, exhibiting precisely the appearance of objects looking through the sea-like haze that at morn and evening in autumn overspread the marsh-lands of England. Everywhere the hostile element is higher than the land, and hides the faint ridge of sandhills that form the boundary between them, so that, even at a small distance from the shore, you see nothing of the lower story of the houses, only their high-pointed roofs clustered together, and looking like those that children make with cards. Unfortunately, ships are not permitted to steam through that famous short cut, the Helder Canal, which would much facilitate the voyage; but, as the distance by sea takes less time than towing through it, we made the personal acquaintance of the "rolling Zuider-Zee," and liked it less than Colman's song about it. We were, however, lucky enough to arrive at a favourable time of tide, and, though the propeller left frequent marks of its passage in the trail of black mud it turned up, crossed the Paampus (a shoal which forms the bar of the port) without difficulty, and found ourselves, thirty-six hours after leaving London, gazing on the domes and steeples, and quaint-looking houses of the ancient city of Amsterdam. The moment we land, our interest enlarges, and we forget that at this season of the year none of those adjuncts which render a metropolitan residence desirable, for its fashion or its amusements, are in existence; the wealthiest and most refined of its inhabitants are out of town, its "societies" scattered, its public places of recreation for the most part shut up. Still, that chief charm of travel, novelty, exists in abundance, and at every few steps we meet with something to strike the eye and merit our attention. It would be impossible not to admire a people who, with such disadvantages of soil and situation, have, by indomitable perseverance, sturdy labour, and patient enterprise, raised cities on the site of shoals and quagmires, and converted their naturally alluvial territory into rich pasture-land. The same reiterated industry that, pile by pile (through layers of peat, in some places, it is said, forty or fifty feet deep), laid the foundation of the city, and diked out its natural enemy, the sea, is still as active as ever in sustaining the victory it has achieved, and illustrates itself not only in *this*—which, if relaxed, would be followed by inevitably fatal consequences—but in the ordinary habits of the people. The homeopathical repairs bestowed daily upon their craft, the *niggling* neatness exercised in their houses, the superlative care by which everything is made to look as well, and last as long, as possible, does not arise from the contemptible spirit of grasping economy, but is natural to the idiosyncracy of a people obliged to exercise minute care, thoughtfulness, and a nice attention to mere details, as a condition of their national existence.

Commercial Englishmen, to whom (to use their own axiom) "time is money," laugh at the routine by which the barges on the Amstel are kept bright and sound, as if newly floated, and the overreaching prudence which detains their ships in dock rather than sail them at lower freights than they are accustomed to, but forget that this nice attention to small effects is so much a national characteristic as to distinguish their school of painting, and that to this principle of caution, under another form, they are indebted for the fact that, while peace and commerce have been driven from almost every other part of the Continent, the Bourse at Amsterdam is as much frequented as ever, and the port thronged, not with hostile ships of war, but wealth-bringing mercantmen.

The men who potter about on board their bees-waxed-looking barges, with a roll of putty in one hand and a paint-brush in the other, varnishing invisible scratches, and filling up the shadow of an opening in their seams, are the sons of those sure, but slow, workers who elevated the ninety islands which compose Amsterdam, and drove the 13,659 piles (pretty well for the foundation of a single building) upon which Van Kempen raised the magnificent Stadthouse that, in two hundred years, has not sunk a quarter of an inch. In a word, however, we, with our railway rapidity of action, our quick returns, and steam-hurried traffic, may laugh at the Dutchman's phlegmatic and plodding nature. It is essential in a land where the carriage of goods is for the most part performed by "trak bots" on slow canals, and the foundation of a man's house takes a longer period to complete than the after-building of it. On the other hand, the splendid results of this long-winded, indefatigable spirit of laborious resolution—call it what you will—cannot fail to awaken admiration when we perceive the disadvantages with which it has had to struggle. The city is a wonder in itself, and its existence a phenomenon from day to day. The breaking in of a dike, the overflowing of a sluice, and it would share the fate of the other "drowned lands" that form the legends of the Zuider-Zee, and return to the oozy salt marsh on which it stands. The ninety islands, with the two hundred and ninety bridges that connect them, are divided into streets and "grachts;" the latter have canals flowing through them, and a line of trees upon their banks. The form of the houses, all alike—and yet not one like its neighbour in point of height, form of windows, or style of decoration—have, viewed from the port, a very curious effect. Even those on the "Buiten Kant," which are for the most part private dwellings, and very handsome, exhibit the same versatility in point of adornment, though their general features are the same.

On the way to this part of the town, at the foot of one of those curious bridges—the construction of which Evelyn noticed two hundred years ago—stands a round, red-brick building, with a white tablet in the wall, on which appears a rude carving of a ship at sea, and a woman with uplifted hands watching its course from a tower; underneath is inscribed, in ancient Flemish, the words, "Scrayer horck," with the date, 1569. The building itself, however, is of much earlier origin; and is said to be coeval with St. Anthony's Gate, the most ancient in the city, and one of its boundaries in the thirteenth century. In those times, and long after, the "Weeping Tower," as it is called (the literal translation of the antique words above), stood far out, at a considerable distance from the town, and was the last point from which departing vessels could

be seen. Here, therefore, the women came to take their farewell gaze of those most dear to them; and here, it is said, one fair young vrouw died of grief at separating from her husband. It is now used as a "kantoor," or excise-office; but the carved legend on the wall—its quaint appearance, with the pathos of its name and history—despite its present purpose, and the very practical, hard-featured, blue-jacketed, brass-buttoned men one always sees trying the focus of their telescope at the upper step of the doorway, retains a degree of even poetic interest. Only a short distance farther on, about the centre of the "Buiten Kant," you see the carved medallion of a man's head, supported by naval and warlike trophies, half-way up the front of one of the houses—it is that of De Buiter, whose name appears beneath. And this was for some time the dwelling of the admiral, the Nelson of the Netherlands. One cannot but be interested in this conservation of his home, so indicative of the enthusiasm with which his memory is regarded, or refuse—for all the triumphant assurance graven on his tomb, that he planted his flag at Chatham—our sympathy with feelings so nearly allied to our own. He lived in an age when rapiers were more influential than goosequills, and the only arbitration thought of between nations, that of might and the sword. We, as a maritime people, know well the ancient value of these arguments; and if we are now in a position to be amongst the ~~war~~ in the almost apostolic mission of peace, it is because war, which had its mission also, in dying out, has left us heirs of that stability, and wealth of arts, and increase of intelligence, which its red hand gathered for us, "when the fight was done," in every field, from Acre down to Waterloo.

But to pass on: only a stone's throw from the "Buiten Kant," we find the "Entrepôt Dock, Arsenal," &c.—all very perfect in their way, but possessing few points of novelty for visitors familiar with those of Sheerness and Portsmouth. We will, therefore, proceed at once to the Botanical and Zoological Gardens, which appear on either side of *Les Arbors*; so that the summer places of amusement lie altogether, and the cornet-à-piston of Frascati's orchestra penetrates the palm-houses of the one, and the alleys of the other, and the interval between them may be walked in a few minutes. Here, for half a franc, one may spend a day very pleasantly in botanising. The garden is small, but well filled, and possesses a very beautiful collection of Cape plants, and a deputy-superintendent extremely intelligent and obliging. We found him delighted to have the opportunity of exercising his English, and loud in his admiration of the scholarship and botanic skill of a fair countrywoman of ours, Mrs. Wr—d, of the Heath, Hampstead, who had spent some time in Amsterdam the previous summer, and had visited the garden daily. She was one of the exceptions he had found to the haughty manners of English visitors generally, who, doubtless, for the most part, regard M. Vander Brink, in his straw hat and round-toed *klompen*, as a part of the exhibition, and his dates, Latin names, and flower histories—unless, indeed, they be botanists themselves—as one does the oral traditions of the guides in Greenwich Hospital, the Abbey, or St. Paul's. A horticulturist by profession—a writer from instinct—a lover of poetry and literature—a ransacker of old chronicles, and collector of rare books,—nothing can exceed the modesty and simplicity of this young man, who seems perfectly unaware of possessing a higher order of attainments than one would expect from a person of his cramped opportunities,

whose only time for study (apart from that of his art) is stolen from his hours of rest. His intelligence is the only trait comparable with his modesty, unless it be (where he sees it really wished for) the readiness with which he imparts it. We noticed, in the hot-houses here, a large species of light-brown beetle, bred in the tan, the male of which is distinguished by a formidable horn, projecting with a slight curve upwards from the front of the head, and which we do not remember to have met with except in collections at home. Twelve years ago the garden appeared cut up into small square beds—perhaps the very form in which Linnaeus saw it, or, more primitively still, that in which it existed at the date of Evelyn's visit, in 1641, thirteen years after its foundation. There are some beautiful specimens of the talipot-tree, with its stem wrapped up with hairy fibres, as if Nature had matted it for travelling. The poisonous euphorbia—with which the Caffres render their arrows deadly—is trained against the wall, and “*pandanus horridus*,” armed with terrific spines, lifts its triangular, sanguine-coloured body, upon pile-like roots, which it drives down according as its growth and weight requires them. Here the supposed sycamore of Scripture puts forth its golden fruit beside the Nile plant, “*papyrus antiqua*;” and there the bread-fruit tree raises its notched stem under a crown of leaves, spread forth like feathers. Anything more beautiful than the velvet ones of the arrowroot-plant, their rich green surface, shaded and underlined with purple, it is impossible to paint.

But the wonders of this exotic repository (for general visitors) are the water-plant, with its hidden reservoirs, and the “*nepenthes distillatoria*,” whose green pitchers, at the period of our visit, were in their prime. There is the whole family of palms, with cocoas, bananas, and Indian-rubber trees—“*siphonica elastica*;” in fact, specimens, but not collections, of almost all the plants introduced into Europe, as well as those indigenous to it. It is quite wonderful (at the small sum charged by the city for admission) that it is not more generally frequented; but, except the students who have the right of *entrée*, the majority of its visitors are strangers, and on any occasion of our going there we never saw above one or two persons walking about; yet, if only for the simple love of flowers, and the charm of shade and odour, one would think it would be a favourite retreat in summer, with at least the fairer portion of the inhabitants. The Zoological Garden, on the contrary, has nothing to complain of on the score of patronage; it has its visitors daily; and on Sundays, after two o'clock, a continuous throng of them, at double the price charged at the Botanical; but, then, to the attractions of living lions, &c., a museum of comparative anatomy, with a fine collection of shells and fossils, there is superadded handsome refreshment-rooms, fragrant alcoves, and shady paths. Here the company take their coffee, sip sherbet, or drink wine; nor is there any veto in existence against the use of that privilege, without which no paradise would be perfect to a Dutchman—smoking is allowed *ad libitum*. The family-man puffs on beside his partner, a fair “*vrouw*,” whose face, like a sea becalmed in sunny weather, has but one expression—that of perfect placidity; cigars and sentiment take the parterres, or stroll within the green screen of the alleys; but in no case do you see the one abandoned for the other. We almost question if gallantry in the Netherlands would make any progress at all without the inspiration of tobacco! Amongst the curiosities in

the museum, they show you a small shell, on the mother-of-pearl lining of which is distinctly portrayed the miniature-head of a boy; it is extremely curious, as there is no appearance of its being artificially done,—on the contrary, it is neither raised nor depressed, but appears to be caused by a difference of colour only; how it should have taken the form it has, and with so much accuracy, appears unaccountable. In one of the cases of stuffed animals is the preserved figure of an ourang-outang, who may be regarded as one of the public benefactors of the city—having produced by his exhibition, when alive, 1700 guilders, which were presented to the poor in 1845; he only survived his translation from the East twelve months.

But now for the park. A handsome avenue, lined with a double tier of elm and lime trees, and as level and firmly-gravelled as a garden-path, leads from the Zoological Gardens to the gates of the "Hortus Botanicus," which is on a line with it; the one opening on the right hand, the other on the left; and not a stone's throw from the last is the *plantuadge*, or, as it is called, with a triple roll of the "r," Pa-r-r-rk. In France, last summer, they used to say that the revolution had induced a double aspiration of this letter; but the sound of the French republican "r" is nothing to the prolonged roll of the same consonant in the Netherlands. Nothing can be more dissimilar to our notions of a place with this name than "les petit arbores" at Amsterdam—a few narrow paths, shaded with trees, converging to a centre, in which seats are sprinkled, with a broad walk on either side, and an enclosure dedicated to the members of certain *societies* who meet at Frascati's during the winter months; for every circle in the social sphere of Amsterdam is divided into societies—a species of family-club—which have their regular winter and summer rendezvous, these in the town, the others in the suburbs, for the purpose of conversation, dancing, concerts, &c. Twice a week, then, besides Sundays, the orchestra plays—the beaux air their dogs, and the ladies their Parisian bonnets; and a few unique specimens of coach-building, with an English brougham or two, wait for their freights at the gate, or make the circuit of the avenues in slow time. A few hours later, when the exclusives have withdrawn, it is thrown open to the general public on payment of a franc each, with the addition of a vast quantity of flambeaux, and *forte* demonstrations on the part of the band; Meyerbeer and Rossini give place to Russel and Julian, and the "Royal Irish" and "Mary Blane" appear just as much at home as at the Surrey Gardens, or in the popular vicinity of the "original Bones." The sentiment, nursed amongst the birds and flowers of the Zoological, becomes a less abstract feeling in the alcoves of the illuminated *plantage*, and (alas! poor human nature!), "be thou as chaste as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny," intrigue is said to be just as rife here as elsewhere. There are other public promenades on the outskirts of the city, and plantations in the vicinity of the different ports; for as nature never makes woods in the Netherlands, the inhabitants endeavour to indemnify themselves by planting trees wherever it is possible—not merely for their beauty and the pleasant shade they afford, but for the purpose of strengthening and binding the embankments, which the interweaving of the roots with the soil do very effectively.

Not only are the public roads converted into avenues throughout the length and breadth of the land, but the "grachts" are planted on either side with rows of linden, or elm, or chestnut, which, in Evelyn's time, made the emperor's street (the "Kiezer's Gracht") appear "like a city in a wood,

through the goodly ranges of stately lime-trees before every man's door at the margin of that goodly aqueduct or river, so curiously wharfed with clinkers (white sun-baked bricks), of which the spacious streets on either side are paved." Both this and the "Heeren Gracht" retain the imposing appearance here described; and with their hanging festoons of carved-work, their richly-ornamented roofs, tall, and, for the most part, violet-tinted windows, and door-lights (to make them range of the same height) glittering with golden stars on a black ground, have a very striking and even magnificent appearance. In the business-streets, and the less private "grachts," the houses, as we have said before, though all alike, are yet all different—evidently the offspring of a single architectural type—all tall and narrow, with high carved gables turned to the street; there is a difference in their tallness, and not one in the whole line will be found to bear a facial resemblance to its neighbour; all are studded full of windows and ornate with scrolls, and foliage, and bas-reliefs; but neither in shape, size, or colour, are the windows of one house like another, neither is there a particle of likeness in their individual adornments; some have dark green "persiennes" on the outside, some light green blinds within, some are tinted blue, some coloured violet, and others *couleur de rose*; some are square with small panes, others tall and narrow, with French casements; some will have three windows on a story, in which case its neighbours on either hand will be sure to have less or more; but they all agree in the article of crane heads projecting from the fronts of the houses, and the little slanting mirrors at the side of the windows, which, without looking out, enables them to see all that passes.

Apropos of look-outs, perhaps the windows of our inn, in the Warmocstraat, commands as animated a view as any in the city; there is, to be sure, little to be seen at the front but the shops and the passing of foot-passengers, for the street, though one of the principal ones, is not wide enough for two carriages to pass abreast—a possibility, perhaps, undreamt of at the period of its creation, when only physicians and great men were permitted to use them, and these only by paying a heavy tax, lest their vibration should be found injurious to the pile-supported city, a law which still enforces the removal of all merchandise by sledges—but the windows at the back look out upon what is called, *par excellence*, the Water, and has the Bourse for its limit at one end, and that momently-recurring feature in Amsterdam, a bridge, at the other. Opposite is a very busy "gracht," with a long line of irregular-looking, narrow-fronted, red, white, and brown houses, with various-coloured windows and stone facings peeping through the green boughs of elm-trees which fringe the banks, and drop their leaves upon the decks of the bright-sided craft moored under them; these, with their long, spangled pennants, Dutch tricolored and painted flags, their varnished hulls and verdant bulwarks, their tiny windows with white muslin curtains, carved tiller-heads, and no end of brass-work about them, have a much livelier air upon their native waters than we should be inclined to give them credit for, especially when the sailors' *vrouws*—generally North Holland or Friesland women—happen to be on board, the former with her head half-helmeted in plates of gold or silver, the latter with a glittering band across her forehead, and ornaments of the same precious metals shining above the little bunch of curls on either temple, under a light lace cap with an extraordinary depth of border behind.

But, to return to the “gracht.” As soon as the palace clock chimes a quarter to three, the exchange bell rings, and the pavement grows black with broadcloth; burgomasters, merchants, brokers, and shipowners are all hurrying to the Bourse, anxious to save a quarter-guilder fine, inflicted if not within its doors when the hour strikes and the bell ceases; and, as this “gracht” is the nearest way from the Wester and Ooster Docks and Buiten Kant, it is of course generally taken. On—on, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, Hollanders—one wonders where they all come from, smoking, chatting, smiling, bowing, examining note-books and bills of lading; some solitary, but for the most part in social groups—three or four together. The ringing of the bell, and hurried congress of burghers, all hastening to the vicinity of the Hotel de Ville, has, for one ignorant of this their custom always of an afternoon, rather an ominous sound and appearance. If from France, the tocsin and national guard occur to him, and he expects to hear the rappel beatis, and see the windows thrown up, and the tricolor flaunt out, forgetful that in this commercial city property is differently regarded from what it is at Paris, and peace and order of much more interest to the careful inhabitants generally, than the glorious, but unripe cry of “Liberté—Egalité—Fraternité!”

As they swarm by, a lady passes with her husband, and, though a stranger, every hat is successively raised to her; a custom which puzzles one at first, but is required by a return of the courtesy at the hands of our male companion; or, if alone, a lady receives it as the homage offered to her sex, not herself, and no acknowledgment is required.

The Bourse is a plain, solid structure, of very modern construction, taxed, like an Irish estate, with the liabilities of its predecessor, in the shape of a privilege, “more honoured in the breach than the observance,” which the children of the town claim in favour of one of the Kalver-street Burgomaster’s School boys, who, at the period of the Spaniards’ attempt to subjugate the country, and during their attack on Amsterdam, discovered, while playing near the Bourse, that powder had been secreted beneath it, for the purpose of destroying the burgomasters and merchants. His timely alarm prevented the calamity; and being offered any reward he desired, he is said to have requested for himself and all the boys of the city to be permitted annually, during fair-time, to beat their drums in front of the Bourse. Time has not annulled this obligation; and on the second Monday in September, the opening day of the fair, every boy in Amsterdam claims his part in the drumming, which lasts, during certain hours, for the week. The intolerable din drives the merchants from the Bourse in despair, and loudly reminds them of their hereditary obligation to the Kalver-street charity children, which obligation has, in modern times, been renewed in the self-sacrifice of Van Speyk, who was one of them.

ST. VERONICA; OR, THE ORDEAL OF FIRE.

A BIOGRAPHY.

The Port.

CHAPTER I.

As I advanced in my devious way through life, all experience tended to confirm me in my adoption of tragedy as a literary pursuit. It is true that I had practised painting with as much industry as ever artist bestowed upon his craft, and had covered my walls with representations of the classic drama; but now the dominant impulse of my mind was to travel in the soul's direction, to go on until I had felt all my being; and while thus engaged in acquiring fresh knowledge of human things, as expressed through my own types of the universal, to rigidly cultivate that pure art which best awakens passion in others by means of words, as it had been roughly excited within me by deeds, and so to fulfil no common destiny. Since the occurrence of late events, I felt as if my vocation had been revealed as if no transient light had dawned upon me. With other views than formerly I began to regard my early sorrows: they appeared now to be the mellowed sources of inspiration, such as poets crave; the living memorials of Nature seen on her troubled sides. I ceased to repine at a lot not happy; it appeared marked out for exaltation, a fruit of the ways of Providence, offspring of a higher wisdom, the aim to create a sufferer who had power to instil sympathy into human breasts. I beheld good springing up in fountains eternal, out of evil which had ceased to afflict; new hope rising grandly, almost dispassionately, in many pleasing forms upon the ancient pedestals of despair. For, in the dramatic world, sorrow revives no more as a misfortune, but as a glory; the signal of heroism, the high emotion wherein great men rise superior to all save doom. As the machinery of Truth thus unrolled her wheels before my eyes, laws hitherto unknown in the moral world were evolved, declaring a force of necessity over things that be; a force I hailed as just, under whose saving constitution the charter of free-will itself had been conceded to each living thing.

And then all that was tragical, the mournful thought and sad expression, affected me profoundly; it seemed to touch me with a feeling which, in seriousness of purpose, resembled religious awe. A fine image had all the importance of a divinity in my mind, and would strike me to earth in unutterable piety towards the sources unknown of the sublime. I began in my new walk by making a rapid survey of the historic field, and, as others had already done, by abstracting the ideal features in their most engaging aspect, for of such transformation are they capable in a master's hand. Then the mighty triumphs of vengeance arose before me in spiritual grandeur; retribution had its hour, justice its final sway.

Having an object in the pursuit, I found myself at times sympathising with the living whose lot was wretched, the foremost of whom I was myself. But I had learned to defy calamity at large; desiring ardently that affliction might befall me, if only to hail its advent as a lesson. I began

to regret my reserve which had tended to limit the circle of my sympathies, and to render so few dear to my heart. But misfortunes were many in that day; and when trouble befel my friends I partook intellectually of its lowering influences, and deeming myself rich in experience at another's expense, the description into which it merged was not the less expressive.

I resumed my costly entertainments at the Aula Palace, and invited almost nightly the most heartless among the great. And what uncommon beings were some of these! The cool conspirator, the bolder assassin, even that modern Brutus himself, Lorenzino! how wild was their aspect, how graceful their intercourse with the refined, how engaging their manner towards the fair! Then I saw the discrepancy between men's actions and the true end of their being, and was diverted by it from the tragical to the sarcastic—that moral frontier over which the damned and the holy recreate their wits at the expense of the feeble minded. The confiding epicure (always mild in conversation), the pleasant libertine, the thoughtful sycophant, the hypocrite of many virtues, all found a welcome within my doors. I loved to contemplate them not only in the present moment, so important to themselves, but as creatures floating down the stream of eternity hereafter; not overlooking their passage through the cemetery where the green lichen would succeed the last vibration of the selfish heart! And so far from shuddering at my own misanthropy, I almost desired a commission from Heaven to put an end by my own devices to the wasteful career of those around me. In the midst of all this want of love for others, self-sympathy alone was not extinct. On the contrary, my sensibility on every subject that concerned myself was diseased. A mere expression having any association with my past life would recal distress, and wounds, accidentally ripped open, would bleed afresh; but the soliloquy, now wasted no more, was inscribed on tablets that it might melt the hearts of men.

All this is true of that time; an unhealthy epoch of limited duration, but not the less to be recorded, since it forms a distinct link in the historic chain. It yields a study of nature, though in her least attractive phase; nevertheless, it was not unproductive of ideas, such as have since met with applause among the very creatures out of the rottenness of whose character they first sprung.

From this state of mind I passed to another, neither more amiable nor just. I seriously considered whether there were not legitimate opportunities, in troubled times like those, to work out the laws of human suffering in men, whom it had been a virtue to torment; wretches whose unpunished crimes had prospered, who, formed by nature to perpetuate evil, had no conscience wherewith to repent of their misdeeds. My thoughts ran wild against those oppressors whose cold-hearted policy I had seen at play in the midst of my country's struggle! How many maxims of government did I not hear uttered to justify, almost to give sensibility to, the decisions of the stony heart—maxims which moved the blame of human misery from priestly councils on to the huge shoulders of Providence itself! And scarce less hateful than the tyrants and their ministries was the literary circle of that day, which I shunned with marked antipathy, consisting as it did of ignorant and pitiful men. Most of them had risen from the social dregs into mortal distinction; all were devoid of respect for real greatness. Had Dante himself lived among

them, they would have silently resisted his claim to glory until, by his unaided efforts, he had secured the prize. Many in the world at large are princes by nature, few by position; those who have vast possessions may display their dignity; those who are poor must be obscure. So is it with genius! Who knows the literary man of that time who has stood forward with disinterested love to promote the welfare of another, whose struggles had not yet won him the affections of mankind?

Had I been born the wretch who, endowed with virtue^{*} and genius, is clad by the donor of such gifts in rags and fed on refuse, my eccentricities must have met resentment, and my pretensions have been trampled on by the illiterate world. But, as the possessor of honour and gold, man almost asked to be insulted by me. Well did he bear my moroseness, which even increased his urbanity, as if supplying a new motive to the flatterer.

There were times, certainly, even then, when I was courteous and cheerful; but these were like the second summers which mock the haggard autumn of the new world, and have no sooner raised the spirits of men than they suddenly depart and leave the decay of nature to proceed unchecked. My mind was agitated by great and complicated passions, but it was not always that I allowed it to be thus a prey to itself. It was rather like a tyrannic government which plants spies in its own heart, in the very centre of its subsistence; the breast a prison in which the free-born passions struggled in irons. In my soul I recognised an iron-crowned divinity controlling the boundless empire of self.

With my own passions thus rising against me, it was often a fearful task to overawe this inward mob, and save the soul from the horrors of civil war. Yet not only effected I this, but more; I preserved the exterior aspect of repose. I smiled peacefully on those I disliked; I blessed the creatures for whose annihilation I could have almost cursed myself, and died. Still the struggle for peace was not all concealed, and then, among other expedients, I would proceed to the church of St. Lorenzo, and, at the tombs of mighty men, learn that exalted calm in which the dead abide. Or, after some of these passionate outbursts, I have sought the nearest mountain solitude. There, to prove to myself how tranquil and self-complacent I had become, I have drawn forth the dagger which I wore always, on whose point was engraved the magic name, and have felt that to touch my heart with it would be to transfix her unconsenting soul with mine in dying ecstasy; and yet I have returned the loved idol to the sheath with a playful smile. And then have I felt with exultation that my army of passions was disciplined, that my spiritual warriors were organised for battles not yet at hand.

Thus is the career of genius like that of a comet among the fixed stars of life. It rolls in an eccentric orbit; suns can arrest it not; its flame is the wonder of the universe, the terror of worlds; an unconscious record in itself of nature's greatness.

And what power does it not confer on the wicked—on those to whom wickedness is no more than the free enjoyment of passion! Thus reasoning within myself, I have stretched my limbs across a loose fragment of mountain, and defied the mass to descend. I have whispered to the passing cataract, "Genius alone was insufficient for one who had to pass through a triple ordeal unscathed; so it was gilded with the madness of hope, that enthusiasm which smooths the rugged ways of earth. I have

coined the true image ; adopted it as my own ; presented it to my fellow-sufferer as a token. How, without the strength of inspiration which a mild insanity puts forth, is such effigy to be borne ? But none shall discover my secret : I conceal it in caverns of the soul deeper than those through which your hissing waters betray their course ; my power lies in its magie ! You may bear my secret to the winds, instil it into the rivers and seas as they engulf you ; but you cannot betray it to man. He shall feel it, and know it not : for in my reason will I conceal it ; and that power is as strong within me still, and as sane as the heavens themselves !

Having thus whispered in the ear of Nature, I have risen again and been quiet as the air after a storm. Strange to say, it was such outbursts as these which led me to discover that peace which, I at last so fully attained to, was the highest attribute of the soul. Be calm, ye philosophers ; to murmur at your lot is to disturb the dead who sleep beneath your feet. Then imitate the peaceful : let the works of God be your model, but the mildness of His Son your example—a mildness more miraculous than the voice which stilled the tempest and convulsed the grave. Let your madness even be tranquil : all things are possible with God—most things with men !

With all this, how conscious was I that my progress as yet was that of moral degradation. I was in the midst of sins which I abhorred ; which I myself committed ; and which yet seemed not my own, but those of man. Why was it thus ? I was to be the sufferer of my race ; to be made a sacrifice for the heathens of my line ; and there can be no suffering without a consciousness of sin ! So was it, then, that Virtue, now that she was my companion, had become as a sport in my hands, and seemed what many deem her, the mere creation of philosophy. Her practical bearings, certainly, were contradicted hourly in the business of the world, and her worshippers had the look of dreamers.

In these moods I lived ; my heart still burning with good, my steps sinking deeper into evil. Yet, I was not of the world !

CHAPTER II.

I SOUGHT Orazio at the Casino : he was only staking money ; but such was his eagerness, that had the universe been his, he would have gambled away the worlds, and, these lost, he would have almost staked his own existence. When the fever is over the gamester feels that he has been a fool, but, while it lasts, not a voice from heaven could convince him that he should desist, unless it promised to make him richer than his antagonists and their united resources. I knew this, and waited until I found him at liberty.

It so happened that in an hour from the time I entered, he had won so much money as to have reduced three or four nobles to beggary.

Orazio was flushed with success ; I approached him, for my sister's sake, with the intention of asking him to my castle. He had been there but once since his marriage, and then only at the funeral of Moro. By more hospitably reminding him of the period when he had liked me best, I thought to rouse his old affection for Angela. When he saw me in such a forgiving humour, at the same time being well pleased with him—

self, his mind, by a coincidence not strange, reverted to the period when I had most served him, and, to my surprise, he himself proposed a visit to the Volterrana, in which we should be accompanied by my sister. I was willing to forgive him the injuries he had done me. I told him that I had come on purpose to invite him; so it was arranged that, on the following day, we should leave the town. But our renewed affection was soon at an end, for a friend of Orazio's had, meantime, arrived at Florence, and claimed his presence at the table to fulfil an old engagement; he remained, and I abandoned him once more to the living vengeance of Moro!

I began to study my sister's sorrows—to keenly witness how her bosom suppressed the sob, how the tears fell with scarcely a corresponding expression of grief. She was too good to complain, and the shadows of distress darkened her spirit rather than her face. We had, by tacit consent, refrained from mentioning Orazio's name! I felt every day more and more disposed to rescue her from her sad position. How beautiful she looked in smile-subdued affliction!

I believed that Orazio still adored Angela in his heart: had he been visited by misfortune he would have sought solace in her alone. But, alas! there is no other misfortune than poverty with worldly men; and, as my sister's dowry was secured to her, he could never feel the grip of want. Strange world! He ranked his wife among the statues of his palace; but, as she was his only true happiness, it was natural that he should neglect her.

It is remarkable that the imaginative are able to foresee the worst that can happen, and often they experience mentally the details of their future misfortunes; but, instead of avoiding the path which leads to trouble, they rather pursue it with the confidence of men inured already to its dangers. On the other hand the prudent, who have no fancy to bear them on its wings, can realise no such vision, and avoid whatever evil they anticipate with an instinctive aversion. I saw that Orazio's hour was come; the reign of terror which he had exercised over me had created a reaction, the result of which I indistinctly foresaw, while I laughed at my late feeble effort to avert it. But the prophetic state of feeling which made me acquainted with this truth was different to that which I had undergone on former occasions. Before, there had existed a dreadful anxiety—an eagerness in company with my resolves, such as is felt by a new ruler in the popular cause; but now, the practice which I had gone through had softened my efforts into a sentiment of tranquillity. The hasty stride across my chamber, the fierce exclamation, did not characterise my proceedings. Reclining rather at full length on a downy couch, I thought over the particulars of a new battle, avoiding carefully the evils which had betrayed me before, and smiling while I negligently rehearsed the scenes.

I remained in this quiet state of mind for some days, awaiting the arrival of the hour which was to incite me to action, not for my own sake, but for the peace of Moro's soul, and the fulfilment of my vow to his dying ear. I saw it approach too soon, for while seated in my study one evening the history of Orazio seemed to pass smoothly over my mind like a vessel on calm waters. Unexcited, I saw my brother conspiring against my life, and coveting the lands of my inheritance. I saw myself on the eve of being dragged to a prison, like a criminal, owing to his false accu-

sation of me concerning the murder. Yet I felt that I had maintained myself superior to his arts, and that I had power to provide for my own safety. Perhaps I was in some degree moved at my sister's lot, for what a painful void was there in my heart on her account! It was the neglected seat of friendship—the place where Orazio might have been. By its side there was another cell of affection, where, faithful as a nun, lived my sister still. Her husband had spurned her side in my heart; widowed, deserted, in tears, her form dwelt within me!

I went to the *Via Romana*, where Orazio and Angela lived. My carriage drove into the court of their palace. I entered, I ascended the steps, I walked into the presence of Angela, she flew into my arms. A floodgate seemed removed from between our emotions which rushed into each other, and were lost in one troubled flood. *

Oh, affection! that I had been set apart for thee! Who was more alive to tenderness, who perceived with sweeter gratitude its humanising effects? I loved my sister above all worldly objects; her devotion, her kindred love entranced me, it quelled my passions, it suspended me in the midst of beatitude! Beautiful, angelic being! she departed early for heaven; she entered its distant convent in her youth; she has taken the veil of glory! But for her premature fate I might have been an unbeliever; but my eyes could not follow all her loveliness into corruption. It is true I traced the withering of that plant of Paradise; the dispersion of each flower! And I looked upon the haunts where she had rested; all was gone: the flowing garment found no form wherewith to borrow grace, the mosaic of her boudoir uselessly awaited her footsteps, the marbles which she had worked into smiles of joy had caught the sadness of the air—smiles which thenceforth expressed, alas! we are only survivors! But it was merely the earth which was thus cypress-shaded by desolation—my love followed her afar, and whenever I looked above I saw her mingling with the angels.

Great, indeed, was my affection, and at this interview it was at its height, like the sky in a sunburned heaven. I spoke of it with fervour, and implored my sister to live no longer in sorrow, but to accompany me to my home. On this occasion my arts of persuasion were exercised with ill-success: she shuddered amidst her tears at the idea of quitting that new home, although it had disappointed her earliest hopes and pleasures, and replaced them with the phantom of love. Orazio had once prized her; she could not now remove herself from the scene of his affection. And as he loved no other, she fondly anticipated a return of his eyes to her fair beauty, of his smiles to her devoted gaze. As I stood, half-deterring from pressing my solicitations further, I thought of my father's words, his fatal love; my mind then passed to all those unhappy creatures whose lot had resembled his, and, succeeding to this train of reflection, the idea of Moro rushed through my brain, his cold hand grasping mine, his impressive look attracting my spirit upwards, and wresting from it a vow too earnest to be forgotten. At the remembrance a frenzy seized on my frame; my heart was maddened. My first impulse was to destroy the statues or to hurl myself on the ground, for a sudden strength possessed me which I could not control, nor, without violence, exhaust. I set fast my teeth, I looked around; the roof and walls of the apartment seemed to await but an outbreak of my stormy spirit to fall a mass of ruins. Without knowing precisely what I was about, I seized on Angela and rushed to my carriage

with the prize. Meeting with some resistance from domestics, the touch of my hand overthrew every one who came near me; some lay prostrate in the corridor, others clung to the palisades, or rolled down the marble steps like masses of inanimate matter. Meantime, I reached my chariot, and was not long in conveying my sister to the palace whence I came.

I took her to her olden chamber. She had fainted, and was as pale as the white rose, all animation being for a long time suspended. She continued during an alarming interval in her first swoon, and only opened her eyes to relapse into another. I summoned Montecatino; he pronounced the heart to be unsound—perhaps broken! She rallied at length, and was sensible; but it was only to sob. At midnight she was left to the care of her old nurse. Looking out of a casement which commanded the court, I observed the excessive beauty of the night: below was a flood of light, above were its unnumbered sources. I was suddenly startled, for at that moment a tremendous knocking at the gates shook the building; the porter rushed into the court, advanced, retreated, and stood still by turns, as if doubting how to act. I commanded him from the window where I was to await my descent before he unbarred the gate. I joined him in the court, and ordered him to be in readiness to open the portal the instant the knocking was repeated. On such occasions as these Orazio was all passion, and I apparently all calmness. I almost hoped by delay to increase his fury and my own tranquillity. In a moment the gate was nearly shattered by the fierce energy of Orazio's arm: it opened, he dashed into the court.

“Restore my wife to me!” he exclaimed; saying which he rushed at me with a naked stiletto, and, piercing my cloak, lost his hold of the weapon, which had become entangled in the folds of my garment. He drew another from his side and aimed a blow at my heart. I turned away, and, with the instrument which he had first used, struck him with fiendlike deliberation at the moment that he staggered past me, uttering the name of Moro as he dropped.

At this same moment Angela flew into the court, and received her husband in her arms. She held him a short time, kissed his forehead, and fell with him to the ground. She rose to gaze at his face; she laughed and screamed. She tried to arouse him. He was dead—perfectly dead. She dropped on the corpse and was insensible once more.

When I saw fully the situation to which I was reduced I groaned inwardly after a deep and long inspiration. No excitement was otherwise mingled in the horrors of that hour. A supernatural stillness hung over my spirit, such as the souls of exiles experience as they wander the margin of the flood, and remember their sins of old. I felt too familiar with my crime; it seemed to have been committed long before, and the spectacle at my feet appeared only monumental. How was this? Accustomed to view all things as predestined, instead of contemplating the present deed, my mind was with Him who before the world was made had ordained all things to be. My spirit was in the dawn of destiny, it hovered upon a period of history which was unwritten, and which the rational tradition of things increase had mysteriously handed down from dateless epochs; periods of anarchy antecedent to the hour when the face of the waters was first ruffled.

If I felt awe it was soothed by these false but sublime associations, for

in comparison with my deed the heavens themselves seemed new. These privileged emotions passed away; of a sudden I was seized by the hand of Time, and whirled into the present. My sister had moved, and looked me in the face, and I was human again.

And then when I beheld the corpse I saw no vices left; but the virtues of my friend seemed still to survive. Forgetful that I had acted only in self-defence—greatly as imagination might exaggerate my position—I hated myself worse than I could have hated a foe, and yet I inclined not to take vengeance on myself. I was conscious that had I perished by my own hand, the mighty universe would have survived my insignificant fall, and in its unchanging aspect been a commentary on my obscure ambition.

Other thoughts led me forth by degrees from the prison of my soul. I looked on high, and beheld the fair moon over the quadrangle of my palace, dressing with a dim beauty the busts of my forefathers; and hundreds of stars drew my attention to the upper regions of the blue abyss. I saw glory in the heavens; I approached timidly, and they resisted not; I mingled my aspiring genius with the tranquil majesty of the universe. It was a great moment in my existence: my moral courage increased, and I drew in with my breath a deep draught of the grandeur of nature. I then was able to look placidly down on the lifeless form, and to gaze until the earth on which my victim lay seemed to glow as an altar. “It is finished,” I thought; “the sacrifice is made.” Smiling almost over the mysterious mystery which the spirit of Moro had thus gained, I looked up at heaven again as I had done when he swore me to this deed; and on that night, in the presence of myriads of worlds, the authors and harbingers of fate, the triumph of tragedy seemed confirmed.

CHAPTER III.

AN investigation into the circumstances of Orazio’s death was formally entered on by the civic authorities. The evidence of my domestics, however, speedily set the inquiry at rest and ended in my favour. But I was ordered to retire a prisoner to my castle as soon as the funeral was over; for the first year of Alessandro’s reign was marked by acts of justice.

My sister was lost to me. She could neither weep nor speak, and her eye was fixed ere it met its object. She knew the worst the moment that she looked on her sea of trouble; she stood not therefore on its shore to regard its vastness, or to draw hope from its illusive horizon, but plunged at once into its depths to rise no more.

She had been sick for many months, and despair had hastened her towards the grave. I felt responsible for these melancholy consequences, but I bore my trial, which was a heavy one, with as much submission as the excitement under which I laboured would allow. I sat by her, watched her, ministered to her, but she scarcely observed me. Her eyes moved vacantly over all objects alike.

Three days after her husband’s death, on entering her apartment I found her on her knees before a crucifix, holding the portrait of Orazio in her embrace, her head resting on the little altar at which she knelt. I called

on her by name, I placed my arm around her, and raising her from her position drew her gently to my breast. She was almost cold; the chill of death entered me; I uttered an involuntary shriek, and dropped the beloved body from my arms. It fell heavily, and the miniature was shivered to atoms. Her attendant had sat in the room unwilling to interrupt her devotions, unconscious of her end.

Her chamber had thus become a sepulchre, her body resting in the attitude of prayer for her departed soul!

On the sixth day the chapel in the parish church at Aula, which was about one mile from the castle, was lined throughout with black, and the windows were blinded with crape, while to displace the darkness many hundred lights burned in the place of mourning. A baronial coronet was fixed in the centre of the ceiling, and waving folds of ermine gracefully descended from it to each corner of the chapel. Beneath the coronet a chaste cenotaph was erected, and on it rested the coffins of the dead. All the nobility of the neighbourhood were invited to attend the funeral, and numbers of both sexes crowded to witness the performance of high mass on the occasion. I took my place apart from the rest, and hid my spirit in mourning. The great altar, whose candlesticks were of solid gold, was profusely illuminated; and the ceremony of high mass commenced in religious pride. The organ pealed forth in mechanical grandeur its imitation of human woe, the voices of chanters mingled with it a penetrating harmony. One particular voice rose higher and sweeter, and seemed to thrill rapturously through the angelic attitudes which lived in the frescoes above.

It is the custom for none to be admitted to these funereal ceremonies who are not attired in mourning, with the exception of those who are about to quit the world for a monastic life. Among the assembly I observed a female clad in white, and decked out in jewels and flowers, while a sad expression of countenance contrasted with those gay habiliments. The virgin was about to take the veil, and thus, for the last time in life, she was to appear among men in the pleasing garb of fashion. As I gazed I wondered at such resignation. Her mind, thought I, is better fortified than mine; she rejects instead of hourly cultivating the little ambition which meets encouragement in this world. She adopts, instead, the hopeless reality of a cell, and patiently awaits her future reward!

My encounter with this lovely young woman at the chapel was one of the most extraordinary events of my life. I had only to look at her face for a moment to discover her perfect resemblance to the charmer of my vision in the robbers' cave. Having once seen the pure reality of all that the most vivid dream could reveal of female beauty, my eyes were fixed on the apparition; my sight grew unsteady in the midst of so much ravishment, and floated in the voluptuous image which was no longer only there, but was all-present as in a world of rapture. And was she to be hidden hereafter from all but the Maker's eye, who might watch over her in the midst of millions as easily as if she were at His right hand? How selfish must be the hearts of those who would devote such loveliness to the desert of religion, to the convent, from whose home enthusiasm was expelled by the shadow of the tomb; as if it were a dwelling-place in the past, and willed by the dead to be for ever theirs! Would the inmates of an arid convent have more sympathy for her than the living? Her

eyes were too mild to have elung to forbidden gladness—her meek expression declared her the victim of the selfish pious—an orphan whom none would rescue.

All other consciousness than that of her presence had vanished from within me. Meantime the service had gone on; its most touching portions had elevated my soul into loftier conceptions of love, not divine but human—the love of virtue, and of her who was its incarnation. The bishop had begun his sermon in reprobating domestic quarrels, and had alluded to the fate of Orazio and Angela. All, save myself, were in tears. I heard not his words. The novice wept as her image had done in my sleep, and once more she resembled a moral sayour in whose veins the blood of the Redeemer flowed, but whose example none could pursue

At length her eyes moved upwards, she directed her looks to the coronet, perhaps to heaven; she dropped them, and they fell in full-orbed vision on me. I started involuntarily and changed countenance; she observed my confusion, and withdrew her gaze, which sank into its wonted supineness; nor was I able, by the most fervid and penetrating expression of love, to recover her glances to me.

I found afterwards on inquiry, that Theonoe had brought the novice with her to the chapel, and that her name was Abarbanel. The reality of her apparition did not lessen the likeness she bore to Ippolito; and as I looked at her, the saying of Angus, that he was a little girl, again came to my remembrance, and more than once, I doubted whether it was not he, in the dress and sex of womanhood, who had appeared in the chapel. My regard for the innocence of Ippolito led me to forbid his presence at the funeral; therefore, not seeing him and the novice together, I was unable at the time to resolve my doubts. But by questioning him about the mass, I was assured that he had not been present, and never having known him to deviate from the strictest truth, believed him. Mindful that Angus had pronounced the real name of Ippolito to be Adora, we called the novice by that name whenever we made her the subject of allusion.

Towards the conclusion of the sermon, I looked around, and saw the monumental figure of my mother. Her marble eye represented the absence of vision, but her benignant smile was saved, and seemed to pause upon the cenotaph before her. Then the crape-lined walls, the burning candles, were restored to my long-abstracted view; on my ear fell the last words of the preacher. Finally, a noise, like the roaring of a distant wave, announced to me that the congregation was rising, and ready to mingle again in worldly scenes.

I returned to Florence, and thus was ended my six days' labour; and I retired from the world into the depths of my own misery, in the vain hope of rest on the seventh, which was the 'abbath-day.

It may appear that this free confession contains inconsistencies of principle and action not easily reconcilable in one man. Often have I thought so too; when, in the same hour, feelings the most humane have been succeeded in me by the wish to end the world by fire, and to involve myself and my species in one common ruin. But the type of this is found in nature; birth is cotemporary with death; growth with decay, in one and the same being. The volcanic region is often the scene of the avalanche; and both, while necessary parts of the world's system, are

apparently inimical to the safety of living things. Winter and summer, night and day, appear equally inconsistent at first view; but between all these diversities, there subsists an intrinsic harmony. The intermediate links which connect them are more or less hidden from the view; but all spring alike from a central government whose effective laws constitute his tyrannous republic of creation. The soul which blasphemers feels not a virtue in its words, but rather a bewildered lamentation of the circumstances which keep piety afar; the heart which is cruel takes but revenge on the fate which placed it thus remote from pity. Evil and good even are members of the same family, as are ugliness and beauty; the one but an irregular manifestation of the other. So are all the works of God, both in their integrity and disorder, reconcilable with wisdom divine; especially since a saving remedy against evil is at the command of all.

For many days after the funeral, I remained in my study, absorbed in active meditation. The time passed rapidly; but my thoughts kept pace with it in its flight. When the twilight of each evening fell, my mind cast on it a maddening glare, and I paused exhausted, as if to rest and contemplate the race which I had run with the hours. In proportion as my strength vanished, my ideas became more vivid, my words more fluent.

The night did not put a period to my labours; I still went on indulging in the pleasing madness of fancy. I depicted my late trials scene by scene, and the events appeared before me with as much force as if again represented in the theatre of the world. The senses were my chief prompters; they opened the memory of recent disaster, and its circle of passions revolved after it again. Night after night, I persisted in these sad delights, until at length I sank back on the couch in a state of insensibility.

I know not how I reached my bed, but when consciousness was restored, I found myself groping on the brink of frenzy, my eyes wandering about my room in search of Giuditta, whose look I now feared to meet. My presence of mind, however, did not entirely forsake me in that hour, for, although I muttered occasionally an unmeaning sentence, I knew it the moment after; as if unable to listen to my words, I could read my recollection of them. Then would I busy myself in trying to extinguish the wild thought, and to strangle the monsters of fancy. After the lapse of several days I slept, and dreamed that I was buried with Orazio and Angela. The dream was tranquil; I awoke refreshed, and from that time began to recover from the low fever which had prostrated me. But I remained weak in mind and body, and felt everything so acutely that I could not, without pain, even have plucked a flower from its stem.

And still, with all this unhealthy sensibility, a feeling of apathy was coexistent. At times, I felt as if I had received a friendly visit from Death, who had appeared in a fascinating shape to invite me to his still domain. Such was my feebleness, I had neither inclination to accept nor to decline his sad but pleasing offer of an untroubled asylum. I could not think, I dared not feel; my hopes were scattered by the autumn which had prematurely visited my soul, and they lay around me like withered leaves, which a spark of emotion must have totally consumed. Tears unbidden traced their way down my cheek, as from time to time I

thought over by-gone days, and on affections lost ; on misdirected ambition ; and the sacrifice of that hourly joy which was originally entailed on being.

And as I thus sadly and penitently mused, my eyes lived upon the floating image of Adora Abarbanel. Suddenly, while I thought of all, in the presence of that heavenly messenger, that being who proved to be the most favoured of all human, a belief came over me that Giuditta's function had for the present ended ; that she whom I had injured had to suffer no longer at contemplating my deeds ; and the same instant, a sound from the Campanile loomed heavily upon my heart.

It was the summons of the Misericordia ! I felt, while the call yet startled me, that I owed all my devotion to that glorious Giuditta. Would that I had obeyed it, as was my duty ! How it would have lightened the burden of her soul at that bitter hour had I gone to her, and returned goodly offices ; to her, the most pure of women, who, from the practice of too much virtue, had been deserted by all in the hour of need.

CHAPTER IV.

THE time had come when I was to put off the tragic mask of Moro, that portraiture of human wickedness, and assume that which is pre-figured in the *Vera Icon*, miraculously transferred in drops of sweat from the Redeemer's visage ; the dewdrops of His thorny crown, effused under harshest experience of sin bruising a divine spirit.

My deed of sin, perpetrated while yet the tragic mask was upon my brow, brought me into the presence of Adora. Thus was there a spot in the valley of deep shades, a Camaldoli in leafy Vallombrosa, whence it was my lot to perceive a glimmer of heaven afar off—to see through the lurid shadows of fire a cool white light above ! I had attained to the sight through blood malevolently spilt, and was to pass to it through a fiery ordeal, the sole road to the possession of her on whose white raiment was the image, and in whose veins flowed the blood of a Redeemer.

She was of the holy family, a race selected in an age of faith to exhibit great examples to mankind. She was another St. Veronica, and was born to impress upon my soul an unfading spectre of the Ecce Homo, which she bore as on a radiant banner. But woe to him who achieves salvation through the like ordeal. And let none deem that where the career of guilt pauses, the confines of heaven come in view. Midway extends a gulf, not for torment, but expiation.

The fatal calm, as if my first love were no longer an element in my destiny, still held me. It led me to disregard the commands of Alessandro, the newly-installed doge (for Florence was subdued under the Medici), to retire a prisoner to my castle. I cared not what might happen. Thanatos, who had crept back into my service during my illness, warned me, but I dismissed him with coldness ; too indifferent to discharge him finally from his office, though the admonitions of Angus rang more loudly than ever in my ears. But I was no longer blind to the character of the man, though I forbore to accuse him of perfidy and

crime. His interview with the robber-chief in Calabria, his presence in the caverns, his earnest conversations with Orazio at the Villa Savatelli—yet more recently, his appearance at Volterra, in the hostile camp—discovered to me his guilt; while his pretensions to literature, his assumed contempt for women, made him despicable to me: yet I retained him in my service, feeling that his time would come.

But what gave me greater uneasiness was my growing unpopularity. The late events had become more and more a subject of conversation in the world. No one understood my motives, or could penetrate into their origin; for, to know me truly, implied a knowledge of relations existing between the Creator and created, but which yet remains unrevealed. All things conspired, therefore, to make it expedient that I should retire to my country dwelling; but I made no attempt to do so; and when the order of the government was repeated in a more peremptory tone, I could only entreat the messenger to convey the necessary orders to my servants, —an act which he performed. Then I travelled over the old country in a state too apathetic to regard the well-loved scenes; yet a sense of liberty, though I was not free, possessed me. The recollection of the young novice was constantly in my thoughts; her heavenly face was ever before my eyes. Milissa's image had in some degree departed; her fascinations were limited to recollection—removed from my feelings to my memory; while Adora, she in whom I saw sublimest virtue, which to behold is to love, was fully established in her stead, and called into being a less passionate and more holy sentiment.

When my carriage reached the spot where the roads divided—one towards my castle, the other in the direction of the villa of Savatelli, at which Adora was then staying—my course hesitated a moment; but ere long I ordered the driver to take the latter road: I had determined to see Adora. On a sudden my energy returned in its wonted strength—an energy which was to overcome many obstacles, and whose impulse, though it might be arrested, could never be destroyed.

As I came in sight of the villa of Savatelli, a spy—he who came as a messenger from the government to me at Florence—presented himself, and demanded a few words of private conversation. Then he briefly intimated that I must accompany him to the fortress of Volterra. Having read his warrant, I surrendered myself into his hands.

I entered a vehicle which presently drove up, and my new acquaintance took his seat outside; but to my surprise a corner of the carriage was occupied by another, a ruffianly-looking fellow, whose exterior was like a column in an armory, he bristled so with weapons. I did not perceive him till I was seated, and the door had closed; and before I could demand his business there, the horses were in rapid motion. I turned to him in silence; his face was muffled; but I kept my eyes on him, while with my left hand I touched my dagger.

“It is useless to resist,” said the ruffian, in a whisper—a truth I had already perceived.

I had heard and read much of the feelings of men under solitary confinement, and was not altogether sorry of an opportunity to experience them in my own case. I soon arrived at the prison-gate, and, having alighted, entered it. I traversed a court, and crossed a drawbridge leading to the tower of the fortress, which we entered through a doorway

sunk in the deep stone walls. We then descended a few steps into a cell, furnished with a seat and a bed of straw. There I was left by the armed man. As he took leave, I desired him not to desert me, and gave him gold, which he eagerly clutched; a circumstance not to be construed otherwise than as favourable. I had never felt the power of the law until I heard the lock turn on my dungeon-door! At the heart-appalling click, I felt separated from the universe—in some degree, from God. I breathed with difficulty. I pressed the palms of my hands against the rough and damp walls, as if to move them from between me and the day, but only to know that I was indeed in bonds. My first emotion was one of lofty anguish, which expressed itself in moans. I sobbed, but with no disposition to shed tears. I shook my limbs with impatience, clasped my hands, and looked upwards into the darkness. I beat my head, but with tenderness; I seized my hair, but with the gentleness of one who had no friend save himself. I sank into my seat; I threw myself on the straw, but rose again immediately. There was no rest for me! I tried to climb to an aperture in the wall, through which a ray of moonlight passed; but the cold chill which struck through me; and the slipping of my foot as I tried to fix it, deterred me. I went to the door and examined the lock; but all my exertions were fruitless: I was a prisoner; the law was stronger than I!

When I had re-collected my senses, I experienced sensations which I had never before known. It seemed to me as if the future were cut off. I could not even look forward to the next moment. Time had become to me a stagnant pool; its onward wave stood still.

When I was first arrested, I suppressed my sentiments of defiance until I should be alone, when I anticipated a fearful outbreak; but instead of this happening, they had passed off completely, and I could have embraced my foes. Again I laid down on the straw, drew my cloak over my head, and invited slumber, feeling as if I might have sunk into total apathy for the remainder of my existence. I thought hurriedly over the past, which had taken the same aspect as the future had so recently assumed; no event attracted; none appeared momentous, or even interesting to me. The loss of liberty was the loss of all concern for what had been, or had yet to be. *

Marvellous were the visions of that night. In a city like Volterra, raised upon Etruscan foundations, and irrigated by the current of my affections, as far as the spirit passes over the ideal forms of what it loves. I naturally dreamt of the things and times of old. First, I saw an Etruscan sarcophagus, on which were sculptured the arch of Hercules, and a funeral procession moving through it. I then beheld various sculptures, mutilated and scattered about the floor. I seemed buried in the ruins of antique art. I stretched my arms forth, as I wonder, when an old man appeared, holding an intense light, and pointing to a chain which was made fast to a staple in the wall, and then towards the floor, in which there were hollows, worn by the feet of some wretched captive.

"I am the Genius of thy house," said the old man, "and an elder of the Etruscan race. I will show thee within this hour things such as you can never again behold."

I arose and followed him. With a key which he drew from his bosom, he opened the door, and led the way up a narrow staircase. As my foot

reached the first step, I met my mother: she shook her head mildly, and disappeared behind me. A second time I was attempting to ascend the steps, when I beheld my father: he set his eyes on me coldly, and vanished. A third time I essayed to mount, when Melissa hurried alarmedly by me, her brother at her heels, hobbling after her on splendid crutches. I paused for breath, and once more began to advance, when Giuditta, winged as an angel, passed me. I then heard the voice of the Genius from above reprobating my delay, and was about to obey his call, when the procession of souls, each bearing a torch, repassed in the order in which they had first appeared, but in more rapid succession, and vanished out of sight. And now ensued a scene which no words can depict. With the rapidity of a waterfall the figures rushed down, and vanishing below, instantly reappeared above, whence again they descended, chased by hell-hounds, which leaped the flight of stairs like cataracts, and howled as from terror, while the slamming of doors shook the tower to its foundation. I sank to the ground exhausted, and continued for some moments, with my head reposing on my hand and my back turned on the infernal scene, the noises of which, lost gradually in the distance, became hushed. When I looked up, the Genius was no longer on the narrow flight, but—as if Palladio had raised his wand—stood at the top of a staircase, which was broad and of great architectural beauty, and had on each side of every step a large alabaster figure.

“Thou hast lost thy way according to thy wont,” said my venerable guide; “ascend without further loss of time, for the night changes.”

I did as he commanded, and no sooner arose than I seemed wafted upward without an effort. A corridor opened on a platform outside the tower, where I found myself with the Genius, and in the distance I saw Ariosto and Michael Angelo in earnest conversation. Such a night as then shone no mortal ever gazed upon: all the luminaries above burned in large distinctness, and the blue sky appeared thrown over them as a precious robe. Below, on all sides, nature slumbered as in refreshing sleep, and seemed entranced in a dream of glorious resurrection from the past revolutions of this globe.

“And now,” said the Genius, “I will display before thee, in the forms of reality, what the Alleghieri, Buonarotti, and Raffaelli have only conceived of art. I will show thee the cartoons and models which were designed by immortal natures before the world was created, and from which its scenery was executed.”

As he thus spoke, his language lifted up my heart, and I felt as if gigantic in stature. I looked, and saw a work of colossal proportions, which, from the perfect intermixture of light and shadow, had the appearance of a solid model. It was the snow-sown wilderness, on which no man reaps: the destitute earth, whose inhabitants are the quivering ice-craggs and rushing waters. This picture disappeared, and I beheld, as at its base, Etruria, Appennine-cinctured, with her feet in the ocean. Her breasts were cities, palace-gemmed; her mantle, the waving corn-fields and pendant vine; her shield, the dark-grey olive-grove.

This also passed away, and figures, single and in groups, stood before me, the divine originals of those serene statues of ancient Hellas which from time past have delighted the chaste vision of man!

“All I have looked upon,” said I, “is grand and beautiful; it is

emblematic of gladness; but fit only to please the perfect and the immortal."

"After those ancient models," replied the Genius, "the perfect and the immortal were created, for such were man and nature originally: but things are now so changed, that it is difficult for the artist to conceive, or the poet to enjoy, their lost beauty. The one must labour through the process of refining nature, and seize the exemplars as they return to the inward vision of reason which could not decay: the other must spend all his years in restoring to his faculties their primitive balance. Great were the labours of Hercules, but those of the Ideal are far greater."

I sank at the feet of the Genius, and embraced his knees, exclaiming, "Blessed art thou who dost thus feast my reason with the teachings of truth."

The Genius smiled, and said, "Follow, and I will bring thee to the labours of a rival school, whose art thou hast had the boldness to enter on."

Again we stood in the corridor, when presently the great staircase gaped at its centre, and the alabaster images stood at double their former distances from each other, and glowed as if illumined.

"Now comes the trial of thy courage," said the Genius; "look over the edge of the corridor, and tell me if thou art so hardy as to face the element which rages beneath us?"

I advanced, and gazed on an ocean of fire, extensive as that which is outspread before the eye of him who stands on the Tuscan shore. The waves were boisterous, as if pregnant with storms contending together for birth, and the heritage of tyranny over nature's calm; and as deep a hue tinged those waves, as is seen when the sun sets in summer like a ball of ruby behind 'the waters. My temples were scorched as I looked upon the billows. I hastily receded, and cried out, "Good Genius, my path has been heretofore perilous; urge me not on to inevitable destruction."

"Thy fears are natural," he answered; "but if thou confidest in me, the vessel of thy fate will be piloted in the way thou hast to go."

He spoke in the manner of one who had already passed through the ordeal which I knew to be awaiting me. I placed myself in his hands. We descended into a ~~heat~~, against whose sides the red waves whitened into foam. We seemed to be voyaging for many nights and days. My companion was silent, and, as I sat beside him, no other idea occupied my mind than that of motion upon a charmed sea. At last we reached the shore of a barren and rocky country, and, gliding among its cliffs, landed upon the silent beach. Standing there, the Genius waved his arm, and the flood went back, when there began to emerge from the sands beautiful remains, as of a ruined city—the reliques of palaces, halls, and temples. I looked round. My eyes were attracted by figures sculptured in whitest marble. The Genius, seeing me dwell on them in admiration, said,

"Palaces may be ruined, halls deserted, temples destroyed; but the works of genius for ever remain. Man may neglect or know them not; but God, as now thou beholdest, is the preserver of all that is worthy to be saved."

Gazing in mute wonder still, I drew nearer, and walked through its streets. Its bold architecture excited within me the most stirring emotions. My eyes flashed upon its noble pediments and columns; and

instead of reflecting with pain on the vanity of the dead who had dwelt there in grandeur, I took account only of their glory, which assumed a solemn and holy aspect in my mind. When I came to examine the marble statues, I discovered each work to express some dominant passion. Here, Laocoons plunged and writhed in the folds of serpents; there, in the midst of petrified beholders, stood Medusa, bristling with Terrors. There, the Gladiator, sinking upon the ground, took his final leave of earth, but spent eternity in expiring. And there the Saint escaped despair, and prayed, and with looks of penitence occupied all time; for though the artist can seize but the feeling of the moment, he makes it last for ever.

Discerning nothing that represented the phases of the soul in repose, I turned to the Genius, and begged him to point out such. He made answer,

“There are none such in this city; them you beheld on the other side of this flood—beheld, but regarded them slightly. Here dwelt the self-accursed: here had their abiding place the impassioned whose ends were attainable only through suffering.”

“What was the end they sought?” I asked.

“Their end was repose, but under conditions not possible to man—a repose which, seeking through excitement, they only attained unto in death. Know that highest art, reaching at the Divine attributes, represents the passionless, the forms in which concentrate harmoniously the energies of human soul in perfect peace. A word more,” continued the Genius, “before we part. Apply what thou hast seen. Hitherto hast thou lived in the joyous Valdarno; there hast thou pursued the first portion of thy career, self-led into many troubles. The vale of life is changing for thee into the valley of the shades, where the buzz of insect—is heard which carries with it the sting of sin. Nor will thy sorrows end there; for when most thou hast need of peace, instead of finding the elysium of thy dreamy hopes, thou wilt be disquieted by a picture of the dark side of thy heart. Such is the portion of those who follow, however far off, the ancient Saviour, that awful Master of old. But fear not for thyself, brave youth, thou whose glory it may be to redeem thy race. I will not forsake thee. When thou hast seen thyself in all the darkness of human nature, the wings of the avenger shall be collapsed, and thou wilt emerge from their shadow into the crystal light of thy apotheosis, to suffer no more. In me behold Atresthe!”



THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER IV.

ALICE NUTTER.

THE quarrel between Nicholas Assheton and Sir Thomas Metcalfe had already been made known to Sir Ralph by the officious Master Potts, and though it occasioned the knight much displeasure, as interfering with the amicable arrangement he hoped to effect with Sir Thomas for his relatives the Robinsons, still he felt sure that he had sufficient influence with his hot-headed cousin, the squire, to prevent the dispute from being carried further, and he only waited the conclusion of the sports on the green to take him to task. What was the knight's surprise and annoyance, therefore, to find that a new brawl had sprung up, and ignorant of its precise cause, he laid it entirely at the door of the turbulent Nicholas. Indeed, on the commencement of the fray he imagined that the squire was personally concerned in it, and, full of wrath, flew to the scene of action; but before he got there, the affair, which, as has been seen, was of short duration, was fully settled, and he only heard the jeers addressed to the retreating combatant by Nicholas. It was not Sir Ralph's way to vent his choler in words, but the squire knew in an instant, from the expression of his countenance, that he was greatly incensed, and therefore hastened to explain.

"What means this unseemly disturbance, Nicholas?" cried Sir Ralph, not allowing the other to speak. "You are ever brawling like an Alsatian squire. Independently of the ill example set to these good folk, who have met here for tranquil amusement, you have counteracted all my plans for the adjustment of the differences between Sir Thomas Metcalfe and our aunt, of Raydale. If you forget what is due to yourself, sir, do not forget what is due to me, and to the name you bear."

"No one but yourself should say as much to me, Sir Ralph," rejoined Nicholas, somewhat haughtily, "but you are under a misapprehension. It is not I who have been fighting, though I should have acted in precisely the same manner as our cousin Dick, if I had received the same affront, and so I make bold to say wold you. Our name shall suffer no discredit from me; and as a gentleman, I assert, that Sir Thomas Metcalfe has only received due chastisement, as you yourself will admit, cousin, when you know all."

"I know him to be overbearing," observed Sir Ralph.

"Overbearing is not the word, cousin," interrupted Nicholas; "he is

as proud as a peacock, and would trample upon us all, and gore us, too, like one of the wild bulls of Bowland, if we would let him have his way. But I would treat him as I would the bull aforesaid, a wild boar, or any other savage and intractable beast, hunt him down, and poll his horns, or pluck out his tusks."

"Come, come, Nicholas, this is no very gentle language," remarked Sir Ralph.

"Why, to speak truth, cousin, I do not feel in any very gentle frame of mind," rejoined the squire; "my ire has been roused by this insolent braggart, my blood is up, and I long to be doing."

"Unchristian feelings, Nicholas," said Sir Ralph, severely, "and should be overcome. Turn the other cheek to the smiter. I trust you bear no malice to Sir Thomas."

"I bear him no malice, for I hope malice is not in my nature, cousin," replied Nicholas, "but I owe him a grudge, and when a fitting opportunity occurs——"

"No more of this, unless you would really incur my displeasure," rejoined Sir Ralph; "the matter has gone far enough, too far, perhaps, for amendment, and if you know it not, I can tell you that Sir Thomas's claims to Raydale will be difficult to dispute, and so our uncle Robinson has found since he hath taken counsel on the case."

"Kave a care, Sir Ralph," said Nicholas, noticing that Master Potts was approaching them, with his ears evidently wide open, "there is that little London lawyer hovering about. But I'll give the cunning fox a double. I'm glad to hear you say so, Sir Ralph," he added, in a tone calculated to reach Potts, "and since our uncle Robinson is so sure of his cause, it may be better to let this blustering knight be. Perchance, it is the certainty of failure that makes him so insensate."

"This is meant to blind me, but it shall not serve your turn, cautious squire," muttered Potts; "I caught enough of what fell just now from Sir Ralph to satisfy me that he hath strong misgivings. But it is best not to appear too secure.—Ah, Sir Ralph," he added, coming forward, "I was right, you see, in my caution. I am a man of peace, and strive to prevent quarrels and bloodshed. Quarrel if you please—and unfortunately men are prone to anger—but always settle your disputes in a court of law; always in a court of law, Sir Ralph. That is the only arena where a sensible man should ever fight. Take good advice, fee your counsel well, and the chances are ten to one in your favour. That is what I say to my worthy and singular good client, Sir Thomas; but he is somewhat headstrong and vehement, and will not listen to me. He is for settling matters by the sword, for making forcible entries and detainers, and ousting the tenants in possession, whereby he would render himself liable to arrest, fine, ransom, and forfeiture, instead of proceeding cautiously and decorously as the law directs, and as I advise, Sir Ralph, by writ of *ejectione firmæ* or action of trespass, the which would assuredly establish his title, and restore him the house and lands. Or he may proceed by writ of right, which, perhaps, in his case, considering the long absence of possession, and the doubts supposed to perplex the title—though I myself have no doubts about it—would be the most efficacious. These are your only true weapons, Sir Ralph,—your writs of entry, assize, and right,—your pleas of novel disseisin, post-disseisin, and re-disseisin,—your remitters, your praecipes, your pones, and your recordari facias. These are the sword, shield, and armour of proof of a wise man."

"Zounds! you take away one's breath with this hailstorm of writs and pleas, master lawyer!" cried Nicholas. "But in one respect I am of your 'worthy and singular good' client's opinion, and would rather trust to my own hand for the defence of my property than to the law to keep it for me."

"Then you would do wrong, good Master Nicholas," rejoined Potts, with a smile of supreme contempt, "for the law is the better guardian and the stronger adversary of the two; and so Sir Thomas will find if he takes my advice, and obtains, as he can and will do, a perfect title *juris et seisinæ conjunctionem*."

"Sir Thomas is still willing to refer the case to my arbitrement, I believe, sir?" demanded Sir Ralph, uneasily.

"He was so, Sir Ralph," rejoined Potts, "unless the assaults and batteries, with intent to do him grievous corporal hurt, which he hath sustained from your relatives, have induced a change of mind in him. But as I premised, Sir Ralph, I am a man of peace, and willing to intermeddle."

"Provided you get your fee, master lawyer," observed Nicholas, sarcastically.

"Certainly, I object not to the *quiddam honorarium*, Master Nicholas," rejoined Potts; "and if my client hath the *quid pro quo*, and gaineth his point, he cannot complain.—But what is this? Some fresh disturbance!"

"Something hath happened to the May Queen," cried Nicholas.

"I trust not," said Sir Ralph, with real concern. "Ha! she has fainted. They are bringing her this way. Poor maid! what can have occasioned this sudden seizure?"

"I think I could give a guess," muttered Nicholas. "Better remove her to the Abbey," he added aloud to the knight.

"You are right," said Sir Ralph. "Our cousin Dick is near her, I observe. He shall see her conveyed there at once."

At this moment Lady Assheton, and Mistress Nutter, with some of the other ladies, came up.

"Just in time, Nell," cried the knight. "Have you your smelling-bottle about you? The May Queen has fainted."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lady Assheton, springing towards Alizon, who was now sustained by young Richard Assheton; the forester having surrendered her to him. "How has this happened?" she inquired, giving her to breathe at a small phial.

"That I cannot tell you, cousin," replied Richard Assheton, "unless from some sudden fright."

"That was it, Master Richard," cried Robin Hood; "she cried out on hearing the clashing of swords, just now, and, I think, pronounced your name, on finding you engaged with Sir Thomas, and immediately after turned pale, and would have fallen if I had not caught her."

"Ah, indeed!" exclaimed Lady Assheton, glancing at Richard, whose eyes fell before her inquiring gaze. "But see, she revives," pursued the lady. "Let me support her head."

As she spoke, Alizon opened her eyes, and perceiving Richard Assheton, who had relinquished her to his relative, standing beside her, she exclaimed,

"Oh! you are safe! I feared——" And then she stopped, greatly embarrassed.

"You feared he might be in danger from his fierce adversary," supplied Lady Assheton; "but no. The conflict is happily over, and he is unhurt."

"I am glad of it," said Alizon, earnestly.

"She had better be taken to the Abbey," remarked Sir Ralph, coming up.

"Nay, she will be more at ease ~~at~~ home," observed Lady Assheton, with a significant look, which, however, failed in reaching her husband.

"Yes, truly shall I, gracious lady," replied Alizon, "far more so. I have given you trouble enough already."

"No trouble at all," said Sir Ralph, kindly; "her ladyship is too happy to be of service in a case like this. Are you not, Nell? The faintness will pass off presently. But let her go to the Abbey at once, and remain there till the evening festivities, in which she takes part, commence. Give her your arm, Dick."

Sir Ralph's word was law, and therefore Lady Assheton made no remonstrance. But she said, quickly,

"I will take care of her myself."

"I require no assistance, madam," replied Alizon, "since Sir Ralph will have me go. Nay, you are too kind, too condescending," she added, reluctantly taking Lady Assheton's proffered arm.

And in this way they proceeded slowly towards the Abbey, escorted by Richard Assheton, and attended by Mistress Braddyl and some others of the ladies.

Amongst those who had watched the progress of the May Queen's restoration with most interest was Mistress Nutter, though she had not interfered; and as Alizon departed with Lady Assheton, she observed to Nicholas, who was standing near,

"Can this be the daughter of Elizabeth Device, and granddaughter of ~~—~~?"

"Your old Pendle witch, Mother Demdike," supplied Nicholas; "the very same, I assure you, Mistress Nutter."

"She is wholly unlike the family," observed the lady; "and her features resemble some I have seen before."

"She does not resemble her mother, undoubtedly," replied Nicholas, "though what her granddame may have been some sixty years ago, when she was Alizon's age, it would be difficult to say. She is no beauty now."

"Those finely modelled features, that graceful figure, and those delicate hands, cannot surely belong to one lowly born and bred?" said Mistress Nutter.

"They differ from the ordinary peasant mould, truly," replied Nicholas. "If you ask me for the lineage of a steed, I can give a guess at it on sight of the animal, but as regards our own race, I'm at fault, Mistress Nutter."

"I must question Elizabeth Device about her," observed Alice. "Strange, I should never have seen her before, though I know the family so well."

"I wish you did not know Mother Demdike quite so well, Mistress Nutter," remarked Nicholas—"a mischievous and malignant old witch, who deserves the tar-barrel. The only marvel is, that she has not been burned long ago. I am of opinion, with many others, that it was she who bewitched your poor husband, Richard Nutter."

" I do not think it," replied Mistress Nutter, with a mournful shake of the head. " Alas, poor man! he died from hard riding, after hard drinking. That was the only witchcraft in his case. Be warned by his fate yourself, Nicholas."

" Hard riding after drinking was more likely to sober him than to kill him," rejoined the squire. " But, as I said just now, I like not this Mother Demdike, nor her rival in iniquity, old Mother Chattox. The devil only knows which of the two is worst. But if the former hag did not bewitch your husband to death, as I shrewdly suspect, it is certain that the latter mumbbling old miscreant killed my elder brother, Richard, by her sorceries."

" Mother Chattox did you a good turn then, Nicholas," observed Mistress Nutter, " in making you master of the fair estates of Downham."

" So far, perhaps, she might," rejoined Nicholas, " but I do not like the manner of it, and would gladly see her burned; nay, I would fire the fagots myself."

" You are as superstitious as the rest, Nicholas," said Mistress Nutter. " For my part, I do not believe in the existence of witches."

" Not believe in witches, with these two living proofs to the contrary?" cried Nicholas, in amazement. " Why, Pendle Forest swarms with witches. They burrow in the hill-side like rabbits in a warren. They are the terror of the whole country. No man's cattle, goods, nor even life, are safe from them, and the only reason why these two old hags, who hold sovereign sway over the others, have 'scaped justice so long, is because every one is afraid to go near them. Their solitary habitations are more strongly guarded than fortresses. Not believe in witches! Why, I should as soon misdoubt the Holy Scriptures."

" It may be because I reside near them that I have so little apprehension, or rather no apprehension at all," replied Mistress Nutter; " but to me, Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox appear two harmless old women."

" They're a couple of dangerous and damnable old hags, and deserve the stake," cried Nicholas, emphatically.

All this discourse had been swallowed with greedy ears by the ever-vigilant Master Potts, who had approached the speakers unperceived; and he now threw in a word.

" So there are suspected witches in Pendle Forest, I find," he said. " I shall make it my business to institute inquiries concerning them, when I visit the place to-morrow. Even if merely ill-reputed, they must be examined, and if found innocent, cleared; if not, punished according to the statute. Our sovereign lord the king holdeth witches in especial abhorrence, and would gladly see all such noxious vermin extirpated from the land, and it will rejoice me to promote his laudable designs. I must pray you to afford me all the assistance you can in the discovery of these dreadful delinquents, good Master Nicholas, and I will take care that your services are duly represented in the proper quarter. As I have just said, the king taketh singular interest in witchcraft, as you may judge if the learned tractate he hath put forth, in form of a dialogue, intituled '*Deemonologie*,' hath ever met your eye; and he is never so well pleased as when the truth of his tenets are proved by such secret offenders being brought to light, and duly punished."

" The king's known superstitious dread of witches makes men seek

them out to win his favour," observed Mistress Nutter. "They have wonderfully increased since the publication of that baneful book!"

"Not so, madam," replied Potts. "Our sovereign lord the king hath a wholesome and just hatred of such evil-doers and traitors to himself and Heaven, and it may be dread of them, as indeed all good men must have; but he would protect his subjects from them, and therefore, in the first year of his reign, which I trust will be long and prosperous, he hath passed a statute, whereby it is enacted 'that all persons invoking any evil spirit, or consulting, covenanting with, entertaining, employing, feeding, or rewarding any evil spirit; or taking up dead bodies from their graves to be used in any witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; or killing or otherwise hurting any person by such infernal arts, shall be guilty of felony without benefit of clergy, and suffer death.' This statute, madam, was intended to check the crimes of necromancy, sorcery, and witchcraft, and not to increase them. And I maintain that it has checked them, and will continue to check them."

"It is a wicked and bloody statute," observed Mistress Nutter, in a deep tone, "and many an innocent life will be sacrificed thereby."

"How, madam!" cried Master Potts, staring aghast. "Do you mean to impugn the sagacity and justice of our high and mighty king, the head of the law, and defender of the faith?"

"I affirm that this is a sanguinary enactment," replied Mistress Nutter, "and will put power into hands that will abuse it, and destroy many guiltless persons. It will make more witches than it will find."

"Some are ready made, methinks," muttered Potts, and we need not go far to find them. You are a zealous advocate for witches, I must say, madam," he added, aloud, "and I shall not forget your arguments in their favour."

"To my prejudice, I doubt not," she rejoined, bitterly.

"No, to the credit of your humanity," he answered, bowing, with pretended conviction.

"Well, I will aid you in your search for witches, Master Potts," observed Nicholas; "for I would gladly see the country rid of these pests. But I warn you the quest will be attended with risk, and you will get few to accompany you, for all the folk hereabouts are mortally afraid of these terrible old hags."

"I fear nothing in the discharge of my duty," replied Master Potts, courageously; "for as our high and mighty sovereign hath well and learnedly observed—'if witches be but apprehended and detained by any private person, upon other private respects, their power, no doubt, either in escaping, or in doing hurt, is no less than ever it was before. But if, on the other part, their apprehending and detention be by the lawful magistrate upon the just respect of their guiltiness in that craft, their power is then no greater than before that ever they meddled with their master. For where God begins justly to strike by his lawful lieutenants, it is not in the devil's power to defraud or bereave him of the office or effect of his powerful and revenging sceptre.' Thus I am safe; and I shall take care to go armed with a proper warrant, which I shall obtain from a magistrate, my honoured friend and singular good client, Master Roger Nowell. This will obtain me such assistance as I may require, and for due observance of my authority I shall likewise take with me a peace-officer, or constable."

" You will do well, Master Potts," said Nicholas; " still you must not put faith in all the idle tales told you, for the common folk hereabouts are blindly and foolishly superstitious, and fancy they discern witchcraft in every mischance, however slight, that befalls them. If ale turn sour after a thunderstorm, the witch hath done it; and if the butter cometh not quickly, she hindereth it. If the meat roast ill, the witch hath turned the spit; and if the lumber pie taste ill, she hath had a finger in it. If your sheep have the foot-rot—your horses the staggers or string-halt—your swine the measles—your hounds a surfeit—or your cow slippeth a calf—the witch is at the bottom of it all. If your maid hath a fit of the sullenness, or doeth her work amiss, or your man breaketh a dish, the witch is in fault, and her shoulders can bear the blame. On this very day of the year—namely, May-day,—the foolish folk hold any aged crone who fetcheth fire to be a witch, and if they catch a hedgehog among their cattle, they will instantly beat it to death with sticks, concluding it to be an old hag in that form come to dry up the milk of their kine."

" These are what Master Potts's royal authority would style ' mere old wives' trattles about the fire,'" observed Mistress Nutter, scornfully.

" Better be over-credulous than over-sceptical," replied Potts. " Even at my lodging in Chancery-lane I have a horseshoe nailed against the door. One cannot be too cautious when one has to fight against the devil, or those in league with him. Your witch should be put to every ordeal. She should be scratched with pins to draw blood from her; weighed against the church bible, though this is not always proof; forced to weep, for a witch can only shed three tears, and those only from the left eye; or, as our sovereign lord the king truly observeth—no offence to you, Mistress Nutter—' Not so much as their eyes are able to shed tears, albeit the womenkind especially be able otherwise to shod tears at every light occasion when they will, yea, although it were disseinbly like the crocodile;' and set on a stool for twenty-four hours, with her legs tied across, and suffered neither to eat, drink, nor sleep during the time. This is the surest way to make her confess her guilt next to swimming. If it fails, then cast her with her thumbs and toes tied across into a pond, and, if she sink not, then is she certainly a witch. Other trials there are, as that by scalding water—sticking knives across—heating of the horseshoe—tying of knots—the sieve and the shears; but the only ordeals safely to be relied on, are the swimming and the stool before mentioned, and from these your witch shall rarely escape. Above all, be sure and search carefully for the witch-mark. I doubt not we shall find it fairly and legibly writ in the devil's characters on Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox. They shall undergo the stool and the pool, and other trials, if required. These old hags shall no longer vex you, good Master Nicholas. Lead them to me, and doubt not I will bring them to condign punishment."

" You will do us good service then, Master Potts," replied Nicholas. " But, since you are so learned in the matter of witchcraft, resolve me, I pray you, how it is, that women are so much more addicted to the practice of the black art than our own sex."

" The answer to the inquiry hath been given by our British Solomon," replied Potts, " and I will deliver it to you in his own words. ' The reason is easy,' he saith, ' for as that sex is frailer than man is, so it is easier to be entrapped in those gross snares of the devil, as was overwell proved to

be true, by the serpent's deceiving of Eva at the beginning, which makes him the homelier with that sex sensine.'"

"A good and sufficient reason, Master Potts," said Nicholas, laughing. "Is it not so, Mistress Nutter?"

"Ay, marry, if it satisfies you," she answered, dryly. "It is of a piece with the rest of the reasoning of the royal pedant, whom Master Potts styles the British Solomon."

"I only give the learned monarch the title by which he is recognised throughout Christendom," rejoined Potts, sharply.

"Well, there is comfort in the thought that I shall never be taken for a wizard," said the squire.

"Be not too sure of that, good Master Nicholas," returned Potts. "Our prescient prince seems to have had you in his eye when he penned his description of a wizard, for, he saith, 'A great number of them that ever have been convict or confessors of witchcraft, as may be presently seen by many that have at this time confessed, are some of them rich and worldly-wise; some of them fat or corpulent in their bodies; and most part of them altogether given over to the pleasures of the flesh, continual haunting of company, and all kinds of merriness, lawful and unlawful.' This hitteth you exactly, Master Nicholas."

"Zounds!" exclaimed the squire, "if this be exact, it toucheth me too nearly to be altogether agreeable."

"The passage is truly quoted, Nicholas," observed Mistress Nutter, with a cold smile. "I perfectly remember it. Master Potts seems to have the 'Daemonologie' at his fingers' ends."

"I have made it my study, madam," replied the lawyer, somewhat mollified by the remark, "as I have the statute on witchcraft, and indeed most other statutes."

"We have wasted time enough in this unprofitable talk," said Mistress Nutter, abruptly quitting them, without bestowing the slightest salutation on Potts.

"I was but jesting in what I said just now, good Master Nicholas," observed the little lawyer, nowise disconcerted at the slight, "though they were the king's exact words I quoted. No one would suspect you of being a wizard—ha!—ha! But I am resolved to prosecute the search, and I calculate upon your aid, and that of Master Richard Assheton, who goes with us."

"You shall have mine, at all events, Master Potts," replied Nicholas; "and I doubt not, my cousin Dick's, too."

"Our May Queen, Alizon Device, is Mother Demdike's granddaughter, is she not?" asked Potts, after a moment's reflection.

"Ay, why do you ask?" demanded Nicholas.

"For a good and sufficing reason," replied Potts. "She might be an important witness, for, as King James saith, 'bairns or wives may, of our law, serve for sufficient witnesses and proofs.' And he goeth on to say, 'For who but witches can be proofs, and so witnesses of the doings of witches?'"

"You do not mean to aver that Alizon Device is a witch, sir?" cried Nicholas, sharply.

"I aver nothing," replied Potts; "but, as a relative of a suspected witch, she will be the best witness against her."

"If you design to meddle with Alizon Device, expect no assistance

from me, Master Potts," said Nicholas, sternly, "but rather the contrary."

"Nay, I but threw out the hint, good Master Nicholas," replied Potts. "Another witness will do equally well. There are other children, no doubt. I rely on you, sir; I rely on you. I shall now go in search of Master Nowell, and obtain the warrant and the constable."

"And I shall go keep my appointment with Parson Dewhurst, at the Abbey," said Nicholas, bowing slightly to the attorney, and taking his departure.

"It will not do to alarm him at present," said Potts, looking after him, "but I'll have that girl as a witness, and I know how to terrify her into compliance. A singular woman, that Mistress Alice Nutter. I must inquire into her history. Odd, how obstinately she set her face against witchcraft. And yet she lives at Rough Lee, in the very heart of a witch district, for such Master Nicholas Assheton calls this Pendle Forest. I shouldn't wonder if she has dealings with the old hags she defends—Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox. Chattox! Lord bless us, what a name!—There's caldron and broomstick in the very sound! And Demdike is little better. Both seem of diabolical invention. If I can unearth a pack of witches, I shall gain much credit from my honourable good lords the judges of assize in these northern parts, besides pleasing the king himself, who is sure to hear of it, and reward my praiseworthy zeal. Look to yourself, Mistress Nutter, and take care you are not caught tripping. And now, for Master Roger Nowell."

With this, he peered about among the crowd in search of the magistrate, but though he thrust his little turned-up nose in every direction, he could not find him, and therefore set out for the Abbey, concluding he had gone thither.

As Mistress Nutter walked along, she perceived James Device among the crowd, holding Jennet by the hand, and motioned him to come to her. Jem instantly understood the sign, and, quitting his little sister, drew near.

"Tell thy mother," said Mistress Nutter, in a tone calculated only for his hearing, "to come to me, at the Abbey, quickly and secretly. I shall be in the ruins of the old convent church. I have somewhat to say to her, that concerns herself as well as me. Thou wilt have to go to Rough Lee and Malkin Tower to-night."

Jem nodded, to show his perfect apprehension of what was said and his assent to it, and while Mistress Nutter moved on with a slow and dignified step, he returned to Jennet, and told her she must go home directly—a piece of intelligence which was not received very graciously by the little maiden; but nothing heeding her unwillingness, Jem walked her off quickly in the direction of the cottage; but while on the way to it, they accidentally encountered their mother, Elizabeth Device, and therefore stopped.

"Yo mun go up to th' Abbey, directly, mother," said Jem, with a wink; "Mistress Nutter wishes to see ye. Yo'n find her i' t' ruins o' t' owd convent church. Tak kere yo're neaw seen. Yo onderstand."

"Yeigh," replied Elizabeth, nodding her head significantly; "ey'n go at woust, an' see after Alizon ot t' same time. Fo ey'm towd hoo has fainted, an been taen to th' Abbey by Lady Assheton."

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES.

“Never heed Alizon,” replied Jem, gruffly. “Hoo’s i’ good hands. Ye munna be seen, ey tell ye. Ey’m going to Malkin Tower to-neet, if yo’n owt to send.”

“To-neet, Jem?” echoed little Jennet.

“Eigh,” rejoined Jem, sharply. “Howd te tongue, wench. Dunna lose time, mother.”

And as he and his little sister pursued their way to the cottage, Elizabeth hobbled off towards the Abbey, muttering, as she went, “I hope Alizon an Mistress Nutter winna meet. Nah that it matters, boh still it’s better not. Strange, the wench should ha’ fainted. Boh she’s always foolish an timmersome, an ey half fear has lost her heart to young Richard Assheton. Ey’n watch her narrowly, an if it turn out to be so, she mun be cured, or he secured—ha! ha!”

And muttering in this way, she passed through the Abbey gateway, the wicket being left open, and proceeded towards the ruinous convent church, taking care as much as possible to avoid observation.

CHAPTER V.

THE GARLAND ON THE GRAVE.

Not far from the green where the May-day revels were held, stood the ancient parish church of Whalley, its square tower surmounted with a flagstaff and banner, and shaking with the joyous peals of the ringers. A picturesque and beautiful structure it was, though full of architectural incongruities, and its grey walls and hoary buttresses, with the lancet-shaped windows of the choir, and the ramified tracery of the fine eastern window, could not fail to please any taste not quite so critical as to require absolute harmony and perfection in a building. Parts of the venerable fabric were older than the Abbey itself, dating back as far as the eleventh century, when a chapel occupied the site, and though many alterations had been made in the subsequent structure at various times, and many beauties destroyed, especially during the period of the Reformation, enough of its pristine character remained to render it a very good specimen of an old country church. Internally, the cylindrical columns of the north aisle, the construction of the choir, and the three stone seats supported on rounded columns near the altar, proclaimed its high antiquity. Within the choir were preserved the eighteen richly-carved stalls once occupying a similar position in the desecrated conventional church; and though exquisite in themselves, they seemed here sadly out of place, not being proportionate to the structure. Their elaborately-carved seats projected far into the body of the church, and their crocketed pinnacles shot up almost to the ceiling. But it was well they had not shared the destruction in which almost all the other ornaments of the magnificent fane they once decorated were involved. Carefully preserved, the black varnished oak well displayed the quaint and grotesque designs with which many of them—the prior’s stall in especial—were embellished. Chief among them was the abbot’s stall, festooned with sculptured vine wreaths and clustering grapes, and bearing the auspicious inscription:

Semper gaudentes sint ista sede sedentes:

singularly inapplicable, however, to the last prelate who filled it. Some fine old monuments, and warlike trophies of neighbouring wealthy families, adorned the walls, and within the nave was a magnificent pew, with a canopy and pillars of elaborately-carved oak, and lattice-work at the sides, allotted to the manor of Read, and recently erected by Roger Nowell; while in the north and south aisles were two small chapels, converted since the reformed faith had obtained, into pews—the one, called Saint Mary's Cage, belonging to the Assheton family; and the other, appertaining to the Catterals of Little Mitton, and designated Saint Nicholas's Cage. Under the last-named chapel were interred some of the Paslews of Wiswall, and here lay the last unfortunate Abbot of Whalley, between whose grave and the Assheton and Braddyll families, a fatal relation was supposed to subsist. Another large pew, allotted to the Towneleys, and designated Saint Anthony's Cage, was rendered remarkable, by a characteristic speech of Sir John Towneley, which gave much offence to the neighbouring dames. Called upon to decide as to the position of the sittings in the church, the discourteous knight made choice of Saint Anthony's Cage, already mentioned, declaring, "My man Shuttleworth, of Hacking, made this form, and here will I sit when I come, and my cousin Nowell may make a seat behind me if he please, and my son Sherburne shall make one on the other side, and Master Catteral another behind him, and for the residue the use shall be, first come first speed, and that will make the proud wives of Whalley rise betimes to come to church." One can fancy the rough knight's chuckle, as he addressed these words to the old clerk, certain of their being quickly repeated to the "proud wives" in question.

Within the churchyard grew two fine old yew trees, now long since decayed and gone, but then spreading their dark green arms over the little turf-covered graves. Reared against the buttresses of the church was an old stone coffin, together with a fragment of a curious monumental effigy, likewise of stone; but the most striking objects in the place, and deservedly ranked amongst the wonders of Whalley, were three remarkable obelisk-shaped crosses, set in a line upon pedestals, covered with singular devices in fretwork, and all three differing in size and design. Evidently of remotest antiquity, these crosses were traditionally assigned to Paullinus, who, according to the Venerable Bede, first preached the Gospel in these parts, in the early part of the seventh century; but other legends were attached to them by the vulgar, and dim mystery brooded over them.

Vestiges of another people and another faith were likewise here discernible, for where the Saxon forefathers of the village prayed and slumbered in death, the Roman invaders of the isle had trodden and perchance performed their religious rites; sc ne traces of an encampment being found in the churchyard by the historian of the spot, while the north boundary of the hallowed precincts was formed by a deep foss, once encompassing the nigh-obliterated fortification. Besides these records of an elder people, there was another memento of bygone days and creeds in a little hermitage and chapel adjoining it, founded in the reign of Edward III., by Henry, Duke of Lancaster, for the support of two recluses and a priest to say masses daily for him and his descendants; but this pious bequest being grievously abused in the subsequent reign of

Henry VI. by Isole de Heton, a fair widow, who, in the first transports of grief vowed herself to Heaven, took up her abode in the hermitage, and led a very disorderly life therein, to the great scandal of the Abbey, and the great prejudice of the morals of its brethren, and at last, tired even of the slight restraint imposed upon her, fled away "contrary to her oath and profession, not willing, nor intending to be restored again," the hermitage was dissolved by the pious monarch, and masses ordered to be said daily in the parish church for the repose of the soul of the founder. Such was the legend attached to the little cell, and tradition went on to say that the anchoress broke her leg in crossing Whalley Nab, and limped ever afterwards; a just judgment on such a heinous offender. Both these little structures were picturesque objects, being overgrown with ivy and woodbine. The chapel was completely in ruins, while the cell, profaned by the misdoings of the dissolute votaress Isole, had been converted into a cage for vagrants and offenders, and made secure by a grated window, and a strong door studded with broad-headed nails.

The view from the churchyard, embracing the vicarage-house, a comfortable residence, surrounded by a large walled-in garden, well stocked with fruit trees, and sheltered by a fine grove of rook-haunted timber, extended on the one hand over the village, and on the other over the Abbey, and was bounded by the towering and well-wooded heights of Whalley Nab. On the side of the Abbey, the most conspicuous objects were the great north-eastern gateway with the ruined conventual church. Ever beautiful, the view was especially so on the present occasion, from the animated scene combined with it; and the pleasant prospect was enjoyed by a large assemblage, who had adjourned thither to witness the concluding part of the festival.

Within the green and flower-decked bowers which, as has before been mentioned, were erected in the churchyard, were seated Doctor Ormerod and Sir Ralph Assheton, with such of their respective guests as had not already retired, including Richard and Nicholas Assheton, both of whom had returned from the Abbey; the former having been dismissed by Lady Assheton from further attendance upon Alizon, and the latter having concluded his discourse with Parson Dewhurst, who, indeed, accompanied him to the church, and was now placed between the vicar and the rector of Middleton. From this gentle elevation the gay company on the green could be fully discerned, the tall maypole, with its garlands and ribands, forming a pivot, about which the throng ever revolved, while stationary amidst the moving masses, the rush-cart reared on high its broad green back, as if to resist the living waves constantly dashed against it. By-and-by a new kind of movement was perceptible, and it soon became evident that a procession was being formed. Immediately afterwards the rush-cart was put in motion, and winded slowly along the narrow street leading to the church, preceded by the morris-dancers, and the other May-day revellers, and followed by a great concourse of people, shouting, dancing, and singing.

On came the crowd. The jingling of bells and the sound of music grew louder and louder, and the procession, lost for awhile behind some intervening habitations, though the men bestriding the rush-cart could be discerned over their summits, burst suddenly into view; and the revellers

entering the churchyard, drew up on either side of the little path leading to the porch, while the rush-cart coming up the next moment, stopped at the gate. Then four young maidens, dressed in white and having baskets in their hands, advanced and scattered flowers along the path; after which ladders were reared against the sides of the rush-cart, and the men descending from their exalted position, bore the garlands to the church, preceded by the vicar and the two other divines, and followed by Robin Hood and his band, the morris-dancers, and a troop of little children singing a hymn. The next step was to unfasten the bundles of rushes, of which the cart was composed, and this was very quickly and skilfully performed, the utmost care being taken of the trinkets and valuables with which it was ornamented. These were gathered together in baskets and conveyed to the vestry, and there locked up. This done, the bundles of rushes were taken up by several old women, who strewed the aisles with them, and placed such as had been tied up as mats in the pews. At the same time, two casks of ale set near the gate, and given for the occasion by the vicar, were broached, and their foaming contents freely distributed among the dancers and the thirsty crowd. Very merry were they, as may be supposed, in consequence, but their mirth was happily kept within due limits of decorum.

When the rush-cart was well-nigh unladen, Richard Assheton entered the church, and greatly pleased with the effect of the flowery garland with which the various pews were decorated, said as much to the vicar, who smilingly replied, that he was glad to find he approved of the practice, "even though it might savour of superstition;" and, as the good doctor walked away, being called forth, the young man almost unconsciously turned into the chapel on the north aisle. Here he stood for a few moments gazing round the church, wrapt in pleasing meditation, in which many objects, somewhat foreign to the place and time, passed through his mind, when, chancing to look down, he saw a small funeral wreath, of mingled yew and cypress, lying at his feet, and a slight tremor passed over his frame, as he found he was standing on the ill-omened grave of Abbot Paslew. Before he could ask himself by whom this sad garland had been so deposited, Nicholas Assheton came up to him, and with a look of great uneasiness cried, "Come away instantly, Dick. Do you know where you are standing?"

"On the grave of the last Abbot of Whalley," replied Richard, smiling.

"Have you forgotten the common saying," cried Nicholas, "that the Assheton who stands on that unlucky grave shall die within the year? Come away at once."

"It is too late," replied Richard; "I have incurred the fate, if such a fate be attached to the tomb, and as my moving away will not preserve me, so my tarrying here cannot injure me further. But I have no fear."

"You have more courage than I possess," rejoined Nicholas. "I would not set foot on that accursed stone for half the county. Its malign influence on our house has been approved too often. The first to experience the fatal destiny were Richard Assheton and John Braddyll, the purchasers of the Abbey. Both met here together on the anniversary of the abbot's execution—some forty years after its occurrence, it is true, and when they were both pretty well stricken in years—and within that year, namely

1578, both died, and were buried in the vault on the opposite side of the church, not many paces from their old enemy. The last instance was my poor brother Richard, who, being incredulous as you are, was resolved to brave the destiny, and stationed himself upon the tomb during divine service; but he, too, died within the appointed time."

"He was bewitched to death—so, at least, it is affirmed," said Richard Assheton, with a smile. "But I believe in one evil influence just as much as in the other."

"It matters not how the destiny be accomplished, so it come to pass," rejoined the squire, turning away. "Heaveu shield you from it!"

"Stay!" said Richard, picking up the wreath. "Who, think you, can have placed this funeral garland on the abbot's grave?"

"I cannot guess," cried Nicholas, staring at it in amazement: "an enemy of ours, most likely. It is neither customary nor lawful in our Protestant country so to ornament graves. Put it down, Dick."

"I shall not displace it, certainly," replied Richard, laying it down again; "but I as little think it has been placed here by a hostile hand, as I do that harm will ensue to me from standing here. To relieve your anxiety, however, I will come forth," he added, stepping into the aisle. "Why should an enemy deposit a garland on the abbot's tomb, since it was by mere chance that it hath met my eyes?"

"Mere chance!" cried Nicholas; "everything is mere chance with you philosophers. There is more than chance in it. My mind misgives me strangely. That terrible old Abbot Paslew is as troublesome to us in death, as he was during life to our predecessor, Richard Assheton. Not content with making his tombstone a weapon of destruction to us, he pays the Abbey itself an occasional visit, and his appearance always betides some disaster to the family. I have never seen him myself, and trust I never shall; but other people have, and have been nigh scared out of their senses by the apparition."

"Idle tales, the invention of over-heated brains," rejoined Richard. "Trust me, the abbot's rest will not be broken till the day when all shall rise from their tombs; though if ever the dead (supposing such a thing possible) could be justified in injuring and affrighting the living, it might be in his case, since he mainly owed his destruction to our ancestor. On the same principle, it has been held that church-lands are unlucky to their lay-possessors; but see how this superstitious notion has been disproved in our own family, to whom Whalley Abbey and its domains have brought wealth, power, and worldly happiness."

"There is something in the notion, nevertheless," replied Nicholas; "and though our case may, I hope, continue an exception to the rule, most grantees of ecclesiastical houses have found them a curse, and the time may come when the Abbey may prove so to our descendants. But without discussing the point, there is one instance in which the malignant influence of the vindictive abbot has undoubtedly extended long after his death. You have heard, I suppose, that he pronounced a dreadful anathema upon the child of a man who had the reputation of being a wizard, and who afterwards acted as his executioner. I know not the whole particulars of the dark story, but I know that Paslew fixed a curse upon the child, declaring it should become a witch, and the mother of witches. And the prediction has been verified. Nigh eighty years have

flown by since then, and the infant still lives—a fearful and mischievous witch—and all her family are similarly fated—all are witches."

"I never heard the story before," said Richard, somewhat thoughtfully; "but I guess to whom you allude—Mother Demdike, of Pendle Forest, and her family."

"Precisely," rejoined Nicholas; "they are a brood of witches."

"In that case, Alizon Device must be a witch," cried Richard; "and I think you will hardly venture upon such an assertion after what you have seen of her to-day. If she be a witch, I would there were many such—as fair and gentle. And see you not how easily the matter is explained? 'Give a dog an ill name and hang him'—a proverb with which you are familiar enough. So with Mother Demdike. Whether really uttered or not, the abbot's curse upon her and her issue has been bruited abroad, and hence she is made a witch, and her children are supposed to inherit the infamous taint. So it is with yon tomb. It is said to be dangerous to our family, and dangerous no doubt it is to those who believe in the saying, which, luckily, I do not. The prophecy works its own fulfilment. The absurdity and injustice of yielding to the opinion are manifest. No wrong can have been done the abbot by Mother Demdike, any more than by her children; and yet they are to be punished for the misdeeds of their predecessor."

"Ay, just as you and I, who are of the third and fourth generation, may be punished for the sins of our fathers," rejoined Nicholas. "You have Scripture against you, Dick. The only thing I see in favour of your argument is, the instance you allege of Alizon. She does not look like a witch, certainly; but there is no saying. She may be only the more dangerous for her fair beauty and apparent innocence!"

"I would answer for her truth with my life!" cried Richard, quickly. "It is impossible to look at her countenance, in which candour and purity shine forth, and doubt her goodness."

"She hath cast her spells over you, Dick, that is certain," rejoined Nicholas, laughing; "but to be serious. Alizon, I admit, is an exception to the rest of the family, but that only strengthens the general rule. Did you ever remark the strange look they all—save the fair maid in question—have about the eyes?"

Richard answered in the negative.

"It is very singular, and I wonder you have not noticed it," pursued Nicholas; "but the question of reputed witchcraft in Mother Demdike has some chance of being speedily settled; for Master Potts, the little London lawyer, who goes with us to Pendle Forest to-morrow, is about to have her arrested and examined before a magistrate."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Richard; "this must be prevented."

"Why so?" exclaimed Nicholas, in surprise.

"Because the prejudice existing against her is sure to convict and destroy her," replied Richard. "Her great age, infirmities, and poverty, will be proofs against her. How can she, or any old enfeebled creature like her, whose decrepitude and misery should move compassion rather than excite fear—how can such a person defend herself against charges easily made and impossible to refute? I do not deny the possibility of witchcraft, even in our own days, though I think it of very unlikely occurrence; but I would determinedly resist giving credit to any tales told by

the superstitious vulgar, who, naturally prone to cruelty, have so many motives for revenging imaginary wrongs. It is placing a dreadful weapon in their hands, of which they have cunning enough to know the use, but neither mercy nor justice enough to restrain them from using it. Better let one guilty person escape, than many innocent perish. So many undefined charges have been brought against Mother Demdike, that at last they have fixed a stigma on her name, and made her an object of dread and suspicion. She is endowed with mysterious power, which would have no effect if not believed in; and now must be burned because she is called a witch, and is doting and vain enough to accept the title."

"There is something in a witch difficult, nay, almost impossible to describe," said Nicholas, "but you cannot be mistaken about her. By her general ill course of life, by repeated acts of mischief, and by threats, followed by the consequences menaced, she becomes known. There is much mystery in the matter, not permitted human knowledge entirely to penetrate; but, as we know from the Scriptures that the sin of witchcraft did exist, and as we have no evidence that it has ceased, so it is fair to conclude that there may be practisers of the dark offence in our own days; and such I hold to be Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox. Rival potentates in evil, they contend which shall do most mischief; but it must be admitted the former bears away the bell."

"If all the ill attributed to her were really caused by her machinations, this might be correct," replied Richard, "but it only shows her to be more calumniated than the other. In a word, cousin Nicholas, I look upon them as two poor old creatures who, persuaded they really possess the supernatural power accorded to them by the vulgar, strive to act up to their parts, and are mainly assisted in doing so by the credulity and fears of their audience."

"Admitting the blind credulity of the multitude," said Nicholas, "and their proneness to discern the hand of the witch in the most trifling accidents; admitting, also, their readiness to accuse any old crone unlucky enough to offend them of sorcery; I still believe that there are actual practisers of the black art, who, for a brief term of power, have entered into a league with Satan, worship him and attend his sabbaths, and have a familiar, in the shape of a cat, dog, toad, or mole, to obey their behests, transform themselves into various shapes—as a hound, horse, or hare,—raise storms of wind or hail, maim cattle, bewitch and slay human beings, and ride whither they will on broomsticks. But holding the contrary opinion, you will not, I apprehend, aid Master Potts in his quest of witches."

"I will not," rejoined Richard. "On the contrary, I will oppose him. But enough of this. Let us go forth."

And they quitted the church together.

THE FOOTPRINTS.

BY CORNELIUS COLVILLE.

THE extraordinary adventure I am about to relate occurred in the autumn of 1822. I was staying in a remote part of the county of —, whither I had gone for the benefit of my health. I intended only to remain a fortnight, and, indeed, could ill be spared from home for a longer period, but I had already derived so much benefit from the change of air, that I determined to prolong my stay another week.

The strange occurrence to which I refer happened only a few days before my return home. One evening I strolled a few miles from the house in which I was staying. I had been prevented from walking during the day, owing to the inclement state of the weather. It had rained without intermission from about six o'clock in the morning till about five in the afternoon, when the vapours cleared away, and, a beautiful evening succeeded. I had been so severely punished all day in consequence of my compulsory confinement, that I hailed the reappearance of fine weather with the liveliest satisfaction, and resolved to profit by it at once. If, however, I could have foreseen the singular circumstances that were about to befall me, the probability is I should have remained in the house, or, at all events, have gone but a short distance from home.

The evening was beautiful, and nature, after the recent rain, seemed to be reanimated with new life. The foliage of the hedge-rows and trees sparkled with small globules of water, which, as the rays of the setting sun were reflected upon them, appeared to be myriads of the most brilliant diamonds. In some places I observed the golden corn still waving in rich luxuriance, and seeming to invite the sickle of the reaper; in others, the piled up sheaves were already waiting for the husbandmen to remove them.

I had wandered on, delighted with the beautiful and ever-varying scene around me, without paying regard to the distance I had travelled or to time, which heedlessly had been suffered to elapse. The road upon which I had been travelling was not much frequented, and it was one that I was totally unacquainted with. The sun had already sunk behind the hills, and the evening shades were beginning to gather around, when I was reminded that it was time to return. I looked at my watch and was surprised to find it already eight o'clock.

As I have previously stated, the way which I had come was unknown to me, and my attention had been so much directed to the objects around me, that I had paid but little attention to it. I had in several instances diverged from one path to another, and was by no means certain that I could find my way back again without assistance. I looked around me to see if any person or house were within sight, that I might make inquiry; I, however, saw neither. For the first mile or two I was perfectly convinced it was the road I had come; but I at last reached a place where the road branched off in four different directions, and was so completely perplexed, that I knew not which to take. I remained here a full quarter of an hour, hoping that some person would appear in sight and extricate me from the awkward dilemma in which I was placed. I waited in vain; no one appeared. The darkness was fast approaching, and there was little time to lose. The moon had not yet risen, and her absence caused me much uneasiness. I regarded the roads for a few minutes with the greatest attention, and at length took that which, to the best of

my knowledge, appeared to be the right one. As I proceeded, I saw two or three objects which I thought I had previously passed, and this circumstance rendered me more comfortable in my mind than I should otherwise have been. I travelled a considerable distance, but could not perceive that I was getting any nearer home. Indeed, the painful truth now forced itself upon me, that I had taken the wrong road. It was useless to think of retracing my steps, for the path having been tortuous and intricate, I did not think myself capable of doing so. I paused for a few minutes and took a survey of the surrounding country, to ascertain, if possible, my present position. Being totally unacquainted with the locality, I could not form the most remote idea. A gleam of hope suddenly burst in upon me. I imagined I descried a feeble light in the distance. I gazed at it intently for a few minutes, and was confirmed in my former opinion. I advanced towards it, for I felt sure that if I could gain no information as to my position, I could at least be furnished with some kind of sleeping accommodation for the night. A short while sufficed to enable me to reach the place whence the light issued. It was a small cottage that stood by the road-side. I knocked at the door, but nobody answered my summons. I repeated the process, but with the same result. I stood for a minute or two, and then walked to the window. I listened, and heard a number of voices within. The persons, whoever they might be, were evidently engaged in a dispute; for the debate ran high, and angry words were distinctly audible. The pulse of my heart beat quickly. I was greatly agitated, and scarcely knew what would be the best course to pursue under the circumstances. The hour was now becoming late, and the only light afforded me was from the stars in the blue firmament above. It became necessary, if I could not secure a lodging where I was, to proceed in some direction. After a little hesitation, I again knocked at the door, much louder than I had previously done. This time my application was successful, for some one, in stentorian tone of voice, demanded—

“Who’s there?”

“A stranger,” I tremulously replied.

“What do you want?” inquired the man, in a surly tone.

“A bed for the night, or—”

“We havn’t one for ourselves,” was the reply.

“I should be content to lie on the floor,” I suggested.

“There’s not room,” answered the man.

“Will you,” I inquired, as a *dernière ressource*, “point me the way to —, or to the nearest inn.”

The man now slowly undid the fastenings of the door, and in a short time his huge, ungainly figure was revealed to my view. His countenance was much disfigured, as though with blows, and its expression very repulsive.

“I do not know that place,” he replied. “The nearest inn is about three miles from here. Take the road to the right, and go straight forward.”

I thanked him, and walked in the direction he had pointed out. The appearance of the man had not at all prepossessed me in his favour, nor had the noise that I had heard within the cottage tended to lull my suspicions as to the character of its inmates. I could not help thinking there was a reason for refusing me shelter for the night. Some deed was probably to be accomplished which required the presence of as few eye-witnesses as possible. When I was out of the man’s sight, I ran for

a considerable distance ; for it appeared to me that I was in great danger of being waylaid—robbed, perhaps murdered. It was now very dark, and about ten o'clock. The road I was now traversing was remarkably lonely ; skirted, for a great distance on both sides, by thick, umbrageous woods. I walked swiftly forward, trusting that I should at length reach a house where shelter for the night and some refreshment would be afforded me, for I was nearly exhausted by hunger and fatigue.

As far as I can judge, I had travelled upwards of three miles, and still no house of any kind was visible. I was about to give the matter up in despair, and seek shelter under some hedge for the night, when I observed a flickering light, apparently but a short distance to the right. I made no doubt that this was the inn alluded to by the man, and accordingly journeyed on towards it. The light, however, led me entirely from the road on which I had been travelling, and, in order to reach it, it appeared necessary to make a path through the fields, if none was already provided. I looked around me for a few minutes, and at length conceived I had found the proper way ; but I speedily discovered my mistake, for when I had arrived at the other end of the field, I saw that it was not a regular footpath. I was, however, determined not to return, so I contrived to make my way through the hedge into the next field. The road became still more disagreeable, especially to a person whose feet were naturally tender, and who had already accomplished a pretty long journey. This was a fallow-field, and full of large clods and stones. I managed, however, to get across it, although I had another fence to climb when I had done so. I passed more quickly through the next two or three fields, but did not seem to be approaching any nearer to the light. I began now, indeed, to fear that it might be some treacherous *ignis fatuus*, or will-o'-the-wisp, that was luring me into all kinds of dangers and difficulties. At this point I nearly gave up the enterprise as hopeless ; but my energy again returned, and I hastened forward. Several other fields were crossed, but the goal seemed as far distant as ever. I would not now suffer my exertions to flag, so I pressed on, and, after the elapse of about half an hour, found, to my great joy, that I was now only a few hundred yards from the object of my search. There was still, however, a wood to pass through, which presented as many difficulties as I had as yet encountered ; for the underwood was very thick and troublesome, and my hands were frightfully scratched by the brambles.

When I emerged from the wood, the moon, which had now risen, shed a rich silvery light upon a strange, antiquated-looking tower, from a window of which the light which had led me hither issued. The building was a fine specimen of the Norman style of architecture, and seemed so far to have escaped the ravages of time as to render only a few repairs necessary. Its grey and venerable battlements (for it had evidently been used as a place of defence) were overgrown with ivy, which pended in long festoons from their sides. Small loopholes were discernible in several parts of the building, and which served to admit the light to some stone steps that led to the top of the tower. This singular fabric stood on a rising ground, which sloped down to the wood already spoken of. It was much screened from observation by thick copses, which on all sides surrounded it.

I stood for some time surveying the place with eager curiosity. There was something so strange about its appearance—so isolated in its situation, that I was at a loss to conjecture by whom it could be inhabited. It

had certainly none of the appearance of an inn, and was evidently not adapted for such a purpose. It could not, therefore, be the house to which the man had directed me; or, if it were, it seemed probable that, in doing so, he was actuated by interested motives. Who knew but the place might be infested with a band of robbers, and that the inhabitants of the cottage were in connexion with it? I confess there seemed to be rational grounds for such a suspicion. The peculiar position of the tower, the lonely and unfrequented character of the district, the appearance of the man at the cottage, and the violent altercation I had heard, all seemed to favour such a supposition. The hour was very late, and I was excessively hungry and fatigued, but I considered it would be imprudent to make known my presence to the inhabitants of the tower before I had taken a better survey of the place. I therefore walked once or twice round it.

A little to the left of the building there was a small garden, at the end of which was erected a slight wooden structure, which I conceived to be a toolhouse, or a place for the reception of garden-utensils. As it was possible, I thought, to learn something of the character of the proprietor by an inspection of his garden, I accordingly entered it. It was laid out in admirable style, and used only as a flower-garden. I walked up and down it once or twice, and at length my attention was riveted, and my alarm and curiosity considerably aroused, when I discovered on a portion of the soil certain indentations, made by a human—or, perhaps, more properly speaking—by a *superhuman* foot! This circumstance called for particular attention on my part, from the fact that the impression of the foot was about twice the size of the foot of an ordinary man! I placed my own by the side of it, and was struck with the contrast. Nor was the distance between the several footmarks less surprising, from which it would appear that the length of the person's step (if, indeed, he were a human being) was most incredible. I traced the footprints for several yards, and found that they were all of the same size, and the space between was the same in every instance. I was at the pains to ascertain this, because I conceived it probable that the indentations I had at first observed might not have been made by a person actually walking; but I was now convinced that they were, and, to all appearance, the pedestrian had only been walking in his ordinary way. This discovery alarmed me not a little, and I was quite at a loss to conceive the nature of a being who seemed to differ so widely from ordinary mortals.

I determined to prosecute my search further. The wooden building, of which I have already spoken, was still unexplored: it could contain nothing, I imagined, but perhaps flower-roots, garden-implements, seed packages, &c.; but in this I was grossly deceived. I had some difficulty to encounter in approaching it, for the ground in front was covered with thorns, which it was necessary first to remove before I could open the door. It was not a pleasant task, and I was not so well prepared for it as I might have been under more favourable circumstances. I was both hungry and fatigued, and if I could but have appeased my voracious appetite, I should have quietly lain under the hedge all night, and given up all idea of effecting an entrance into the tower; but the pangs of hunger were excruciating, and I found it absolutely necessary to procure food somewhere. I had tasted nothing since dinner, which I had sparingly partaken of at an early hour. I proceeded to remove the impediment that prevented my approach to the place in question. It occupied me some time in doing so, for my hands were already very tender,

from having so frequently come in contact with the brambles and thorns. I succeeded, however, at length in removing them, and the way was now clear. I took hold of the door, and attempted to draw it towards me, but it resisted my efforts ; I concluded that it must be locked. I however examined it closely, but found no indications of a lock. I placed my hand on the other side of the little structure, and discovered that the door was only fastened by a piece of cord. This I speedily untied, and immediately succeeded in throwing the door wide open. God of heaven ! I had no sooner done so than I started back with horror, and should have fallen to the ground, but for some wooden palings which now opportunely afforded me support. I shall not forget the spectacle I beheld, and the impression it made upon me. I shook in every limb, and the perspiration streamed copiously from every pore in my body. In the entrance of what I had conceived to be a toolhouse stood, in an erect position, an oblong, wooden box, in which was placed a human body, apparently in the last stage of decomposition. The flesh had nearly all fallen from the face, and the eyes and nose were already gone. Some of the teeth were prominently and disgustingly displayed, whilst others appeared to have fallen out. It was some time before I recovered from the shock I had received ; when I did so, I found, in my precipitate retreat, I had neglected to close the door of the wooden building. I hastened to remedy this omission, and to shut up the frightful and disgusting spectacle from the pure air of heaven.

I now knew not what step to take. If I had been so much surprised and horrified at what I had seen in the garden, it was only reasonable to suppose that the tower itself would display other horrors, perhaps of a more fearful and painful a description. The dead body I had seen only tended to confirm me in my previous conjecture as to the character of the occupiers of the tower. I had now no further doubt that they were robbers—murderers—and that the dead body in question was that of one of their victims. Still the footprints upon the soil were inexplicable. I was unable to form any idea as to how they had come there, although I was fully persuaded that they were not those of an ordinary human being.

My hunger was now insupportable, and I would have given anything I possessed to appease it. I examined my pockets, and found that they contained a sovereign and a few shillings in silver. If the inhabitants of the tower were really what I apprehended they were, they could have no inducement to inflict personal injury upon me, if I voluntarily surrendered the money in my possession; and probably their charity would induce them, when I represented my emergency to them, to offer me some food. Filled with this reflection, I advanced to the entrance of this singular building. I knocked at the door loudly with my hand, but received no answer. I repeated the summons, but with no better success. As a last resource, I pushed the door from me, and, to my great astonishment, it flew open.

With considerable hesitation I walked in, and entered a small room on the left. I was struck with the oddity of the furniture, which was old-fashioned, and principally made of oak. A square table stood in the centre, but although I am a man of an average height, the table reached to my chest when I was standing. There were two enormous sized chairs placed at the top and bottom, either of them capable of holding three persons with ease. Further examination revealed to me other articles corresponding in size with those I have named. There was a very large

couch of antique manufacture, which extended from one end of the room to the other, and which could not be less than twelve or thirteen feet in length, and proportionably broad; there was a footstool capable, from its appearance, of bearing the weight of an ox. . The massive stone walls of the room were hung, in various places, with a few grim-looking portraits and some faded specimens of embroidery. An excellent fire was burning in the grate, and which gave a somewhat cheerful aspect to the place.

I looked eagerly round for food, and having discovered a small closet, I speedily effected an entrance into it, but had my curiosity only increased for my pains. It contained glasses and articles of crockery-ware of a most unusual size, and capable of holding large quantities of liquor. I determined to extend my search, and, therefore, left this curious apartment, and ascended some stone steps till I came to a door on the right, which I opened. I stepped into the room without ceremony, and which I found to be a bedchamber. The bed it contained was the most extraordinary I ever beheld; its magnitude and apparent strength would have been incredible, had I not seen it with my own eyes. It seemed more adapted for an elephant than for a human being. The dressing-table, wash-stand, chairs, &c., corresponded in dimensions with this great unwieldly piece of furniture. Who could possibly be the inhabitants of this remarkable place? I had made sufficient noise to alarm a whole household, but nobody appeared. Everything I had seen indicated that the building had only very recently been occupied. The large fire in the room below—the bed ready for the reception of its usual occupiers—the cleanliness, and order everywhere observable—yet, strange to say, it appeared now to be completely deserted, and exposed to the intrusion of any stranger who might wish to enter.

I left this room and ascended some more steps, and entered another chamber, but my surprise was further increased by discovering that the articles in this place were all made on a remarkably diminutive scale. The bed was not more than four-and-a-half feet in length, and very low. The chairs, tables, &c., were made in a similar fashion. I was more perplexed than ever, and began to fancy that I was in some place of enchantment. I presently quitted this room, and finding that the steps now led to the top of the tower, I descended. When I reached the apartment I had at first entered, it is impossible to convey an adequate idea of my astonishment. Upon the table I have described was spread an elegant repast, consisting of beautiful pastry, sandwiches, and some excellent wines! I did not stay to ask whence it had come from, though I was half inclined to think it had been sent by some good fairy. After I had gratified my appetite, I began to reflect upon the matter, and was almost persuaded to believe that I was actually in a place which was under the spell of some potent enchanter.

Whilst turning this matter over in my mind, I fancied I heard the cries of a human being in the greatest agony. I listened, and the sorrowful tones were repeated. They seemed to proceed from below. I continued to listen, but they suddenly ceased altogether, and I threw myself upon the couch and fell asleep.

I slept two or three hours, when I suddenly started up. I know not whether there was an impression upon my mind that some event was about to happen, but I felt alarmed and uneasy. The moon was still shining with her former splendour, pouring a rich flood of light upon the foliage of the surrounding trees. I approached the window, and was

horror-struck to behold a figure of prodigious size rapidly advancing towards the tower. He wore a kind of blouse; and a thick leather belt, with a large buckle in front, was fastened round his waist. On his head he wore a thick sable cap. He was not long in reaching the tower, which he entered without ceremony. I was about to throw myself before him and implore his mercy, when, by a signal of his hand, he prevented me. In as few words as possible I explained to him the various circumstances which had caused me to become an inmate of his residence. I of course concluded he was the owner of the place. He smiled benevolently, and told me to retire again to rest.

I arose late on the following morning. My host was not long behind me. He was the most extraordinary man I ever saw; perfectly formed, but of the most gigantic stature. I informed him of the alarm I had experienced at what I had seen and heard in the tower. I deemed it prudent to be silent for the present as to the discovery I had made in the garden.

“Everything which you have seen and heard,” said mine host, “is easily accounted for. I am what is popularly called a giant, and till within a year ago, both myself and wife (who was a giantess) used to travel round the country exhibiting ourselves to the public. By this means we accumulated a sufficient sum of money to retire into private life; and, being anxious to escape observation, bought this old tower, where the curiosity of the idle put us to no inconvenience. My wife has been dead six months. The room with the diminutive furniture was provided for an old friend of mine—a dwarf, who still travels, and occasionally visits me.”

I further asked him to explain in what way the repast of which I had partaken on the previous night had been provided, and the meaning of the mournful cries I had heard.

“In an apartment beneath the tower,” resumed mine host, “and to which you have access from behind, there is an old bedridden woman and her daughter, the former of whom is an old servant of mine. She is often, in her bodily pain, heard to make loud lamentation. The supper of which you partook was prepared for me.”

I at once apologised for the liberty I had taken with it.

“How far shall I be from —, then?” I asked.

“About eight miles. I will show you in what direction to go; but before you depart, I must be permitted to show you a curiosity. Step this way.”

And he led me to the garden, and proceeded to the wooden building previously referred to.

I started involuntarily back when I perceived his object. I, however, concealed my agitation, so as to give rise to no suspicion upon his part.

He opened the door of the structure, and revealed to me once more the horrible corpse I had gazed upon on the preceding night.

“This is an Egyptian mummy,” he said, “and which we used to exhibit to the public. It belongs to a period 1200 years before the Christian era, and was the daughter of the highpriest of Thebes.”

I was now more reconciled to the repulsive object, and examined it with some attention, though it was still very hideous.

My host now pointed out to me the road I was to take. I thanked him for his kindness, and bade him farewell. When I reached home, the story I have just related was declared by all to whom I related it to be incredible, but I can assure the reader it is strictly true.

“T O M M Y.”

BY JOSEPH ANTHONY, JUN.

THE familiar abbreviation of a patronymic placed at the head of this essay is not, as at first sight might be imagined, intended to herald an account of some son of the soil who has “shuffled off this mortal coil” under circumstances worthy of being recorded, as offering variety to the general exits of the human family from the stage of life; nor yet is it intended as the precursor of a dissertation on the abbreviations of nomenclature. No; the writer has a far different object in view, being neither more nor less than that of bestowing a title on a prominent, and, to an observer, a striking feature in every-day life, and which has hitherto been without a name.

The reader will, probably be startled at the boldness of the attempt; and, should he not find the appellation chosen a felicitous one, or, at least, possessing some claims to be received as a happy hit, he will, of course, be justified in applying to the attempt any epithet he may choose, consigning it to that oblivion which ever has, and ever will, await the aspirations of fustian.

The writer would, however, premise that he does not claim to be the originator of an appellation which, amongst those who have adopted it, has been found of infinite service; yet, with the admission that he is not the actual originator, he cannot deny himself the opportunity of observing that, by explaining the applicability of the term to a few, he has since marked its advancement and general adoption with the many, and has been frequently struck with the remarks of some who, finding it so useful an auxiliary to their mother tongue, have confessed that, without the adoption of the title of this essay, it would be all but an impossibility to make intelligible their opinions on things which, as we have before remarked, are represented before the observant eye in scenes of every-day life.

Before proceeding further with the subject, we would observe, that our ambition is not to instruct, but to amuse; and that, although an anomaly in language is here presented, an expression at variance with the accepted phraseology of the day, and although very far from dignified or profound, we feel justified in thus advancing it, as it has taken with all sorts of people—the more thought upon by them, the greater ideas have been conceived of it—and has made such impressions as bid fair not to be worn out or effaced. For, as has been well observed, “True it is, when parties of various humours and inclinations join in the same approbation of any action or thing, the union of sentiment, the combination of so many different judgments, stamps an indisputable value on that which meets with such universal applause.”

But what is Tommy?

Tommy is the title of a great whole, admitting of innumerable classifications. There is the Tommy of Society, of the Stage, the Pulpit, and the Bar, and very many others. Without further enumeration, we will now plunge in *medias res*, and give, as they suggest themselves, sketches illustrative of the title of this paper.

For this purpose, reader, we will trouble you to exercise your organ of imagination, and conceive yourself, with us, in a spacious concert-hall, in

a Leviathan town of the north, celebrated for its music and misery, clouds, calico, and cash.

We introduce you as a stranger to this assemblage of wealth and beauty, rendered highly select by an exclusive system adopted in the admission of members, and which ensures the Tommy of high (that is the town's term for wealthy) provincial society being presented to us. It is a full dress, and consequently a fashionable night. Observe the looks of the visitors already seated at the last comers as they enter—the nods, the smiles, the whispered comments, the hurried salute. Our seats, you perceive, command a good view of the room. This part, you must know, is called Market-row, so named from the promenading *beaux* being enabled here to obtain snatches of conversation with the fair ones who are in the market, and who, being so, make it a point in this particular *locale* to obtain good places. Having given you this piece of information, you will not be surprised to hear that many matches have originated on this very spot, and, that consequently, the whole system is viewed quite in a commercial point of view.

The hall is nearly full, yet many are still crowding in, and not a few turn to the gallery, evidently much disappointed in being unable to obtain seats here below. Observe yon old dowager with the fair girl by her side. See, they stop to address the chattering trio on our right. Listen! "Ah, Miss Jane, I am delighted to see you! Hope you are well. Fanny, you are looking charming to-night, I declare. How is papa? When will you give us a call? We shall be most happy to see you." And she hurries away with her companion, not one of her three questions answered, nor answering one of a similar number addressed to them by Miss Jane and her friends, in the same hollow complimentary manner. Yes, so it is, reader; we are now surrounded by the atmosphere of Tommy.

What a buzz there is around us. Strange as it may appear, we assure you that this, and the interval between the first and second part of the concert, are the most prized portions of the evening's amusements. If you are a lover of music, and anticipate that, at the commencement of the concert, this general chatter will cease, much disappointed will you be. There will certainly not be such a universal babble as you now hear, for the simple reason that amongst this large assembly there are sure to be some who come to listen to the music. The majority, however, of the somebodies present will exhibit their Tommyish manners by freely conversing with each other in anything but gentle whispers, whilst some star, who has been paid a guinea for every note he sings, warbles forth an impassioned strain, in a language which probably not eight out of the eight hundred present understand; and we think it but fair to state that, should you, being unknown here, wish to be thought something of, it will be well to take advantage of the first lull that offers itself to make some observations aloud—all the better if delivered when a difficult passage is being executed by the *prima donna* of the night. The words should be loudly and lengthily drawled out; and we would suggest, also, the policy of turning your back to the orchestra as you deliver them. Beware of testifying your admiration by applauding any part of the performance, as that would be a token of excitement which here is pronounced low—very low; yet fail not to join the promenaders round the

room when the first part of the performance shall have terminated, and, by staring at the fair Hebes with an air of assurance and self-admiration, sustain the sensation which your first essay in the art of the Tommy of Society may have created.

Such a preposterous display being repugnant to your feelings and good sense, we will venture to request a further hearing during the interval of the concert, and, whilst the lady-killing *beaux* promenade, continue our remarks on Tommy.

Behold those two figures approaching us; rapid be your glance at the spotless gloves of the twain, the well-cut coat, the neckerchief's faultless tie; allow your thoughts not to dwell long in conjecture as to the probable amount of time each one may have devoted to his looking-glass, nor enter into abstruse conjectures as to the possible difficulty they may individually have struggled with in tearing themselves away from the contemplation of their mirrored likenesses. Examine the expression of each countenance; let them be your study; we know it will be but a brief contemplation; nay, you read all in a glance, but confess yourself at a loss to concentrate that all, to convey the result of your reading of their frontispieces in a word or in a moderate sentence. There is vanity, yes—extreme affectation, yes—abominable pride, yes—yes, and so you might go on far into the catalogue of human weaknesses, and yet not have exactly expressed your meaning or the want of an appellation which would unite and express all, and that word is Tommy—yes, killing Tommy. And why is it killing Tommy? Who can look upon those two countenances, and the many others who are flocking behind them, ogling the seated beauties in the room, and read not that which passes within with as much ease as though each one bore a tablet on his breast with his thoughts legibly inscribed thereon, and were they to give utterance to their thoughts would not this be their language:—

“Look here, here is something worthy your attention; am I not a handsome looking fellow? I remember having heard in my earlier days that I had my mother's eyes, my mother's mouth, and I have not forgotten that my mother was considered very beautiful.” Another: “Here is a brow; you may, perhaps, read there is something beneath it; my nose, have I not been told that it is the very counterpart of Byron's, and my locks are almost as luxuriant as my sister's, to say nothing of my new satin stock and pearl pin.” Observe the smirking smile which at intervals irradiates their countenances, the self-satisfied glance of the killer as he meets the gaze of some fair daughter of Eve, who is probably reciprocating a little killing Tommy, also!

But here we touch upon delicate ground; let us not venture to dwell upon the little arts which they may legitimately practise in the science of captivation; but, *à propos* to this, a passage from the *Spectator* occurs to us on the subject:—

“Women, whose hearts are fixed upon the pleasure they have in the consciousness that they are the objects of love and admiration, are ever changing the air of their countenances and altering the attitudes of their bodies to strike the hearts of their beholders with new sense of their beauty. The dressing part of our sex, whose minds are the same with the sillier part of the other, are exactly in the like uneasy condition to be regarded for a well-tied cravat, a hat cocked with an uncommon briskness,

a very well chosen coat, or other instances of *merit* which they are impatient to see unobserved."

Enough of the Tommy of a public room; let us turn to another of its branches. True friendship knows no Tommy, but insincerity much; and, indeed, the every-day dealings of mankind are full of it. It may be found peeping forth in the pulpit, abounds in the senate, and flourishes in the atmosphere of a court. At a public dinner, a testimonial feast for instance, there is ever a great display of it. The mealy-mouthed orator who, warmed by his subject, or by wine, in expatiating on the character of the gentlemen whose health he is about to propose, feels, by some extraordinary process within his own cranium, justified in attributing to him the possession of such virtues, that the rest of the company must infallibly look upon him as an angel, were he not cased in broad cloth, and had they not a glimmering recollection of having very recently seen him convey into his interior sundry unweighed quantities of such earthly things as roast beef and plum-pudding.

And this gifted and good son of Adam, whose name, according to the gentleman who proposes his health, is destined to descend to posterity as the pure philanthropist, or the immaculate patriot, is probably being tortured whilst listening to panegyries so freely bestowed, by a knocking at the heart, reproaching him for having so cruelly, only the day before, kicked poor blind beggar Will out of his garden, or by a stinging conviction that the tenant of his waistcoat pocket, in the shape of a hundred pound note, being a slight acknowledgment from the sitting member for the patriot's disinterested services, could another tale unfold; and were it invested with the powers of speech, might, with justice, interrupt the fulsome orator with the cry of "Tommy!"

But the Tommy of the Drama, lovers of Thespis condemn not the theme, nor hastily jump to the conclusion that ridicule of the art is intended. The drama has not a warmer admirer than the writer, nor one who more sincerely regrets that the May of its existence appears to have passed away, and for ever. The drama, there is magic in the name; for though the enthusiasm of the boy may have given place to the more sober admiration of maturer years, where is he who never seeks again that which probably first warmed and inspired his imagination—and if for that alone cherishes a love of it through a lifetime—where is he who has not revelled in the recollection of those young bright hours when fancy's flights were unfettered by the stern realities of life, when the mysterious could cast its spell over the soul, exceeded alone in its thrilling power by the fairy visions of the bright and the beautiful?

With recollections so cherished it may appear strange that we could desire for a moment to show up the Tommy of the stage; and there are many who would, no doubt, join in the declaration which we have frequently heard, that no true lover of the legitimate drama could enjoy or enter into the spirit of aught that might tend to throw discredit on the art, such discredit in their eyes being a travestie of any of Will Shakespeare's undying plays, or of any other piece which has taken its place amongst the few sterling productions which are regarded as models for succeeding writers, and gems of dramatic representation. A friend of ours, whom we will here call Tom Merry, who is a great admirer of burlesque performances, and who has been heard to declare that "Hamlet Travestie" is the best thing he ever beheld, is not willing to concede that

in consequence thereof, he is incapable of appreciating the beauties which abound in “Hamlet,” or yet, because tears of laughter have rolled down his cheeks whilst beholding Hammond enact the jealous *Moor*, supported by an *Iago*, who spoke doggrel rhyme with a strong Irish brogue, that he can be pronounced insensible to the unequalled and magnificent language which reveals the passions of the human heart in “Othello.” We will not attempt to decide upon the case, but do not hesitate to confess that, like Merry, we ‘have enjoyed many a hearty cachination whilst witnessing the travesties above named.

Our object is to portray the Tommy of the Drama, so frequently brought before the public through the instrumentality of wretched actors and worse writers, who pander to a low taste, and offer up that which is as far removed from reason as it is from nature. Nay, even the best pieces in the hands of some of these depredators on common sense, becomes what we would call Tommy—when talentless Thespians assume the representation of characters requiring a studied knowledge of the author, and the essential ability so to follow in the wake of nature, in the development of the passions, as to enlist by their truthfulness, the spectator’s sympathy, and command his admiration. Members of the profession who, for want of genius to conceive, and ability to execute, render that ridiculous which would otherwise be perfect in its illusion and rivetting in its interest—who imagine a knowledge of stage trickery to be an excellent substitute for a knowledge of the workings of the heart, and who gabble over a beautiful passage requiring discrimination and taste in the delivery to arrive at a part, when the stentorian lungs may be safely called into requisition, to vociferate such high-sounding and throaty words as—vengeance and revenge.

The Tommy of the Drama flourishes principally in that department of the art which is but little played at the large, and forms the staple part of the business at the minor theatres, and that is the melodrama, in which the improbable is generally woven with the exaggerated possible, and when the interest is sustained by plenty of incident, and by a series of thrilling stage effects.

Here is the title of a piece which recently had a great run at a minor theatre in one of the large towns of the north; it is a fine specimen of the mysterious Tommy—“Blanche, The Disowned; or, The Fearful Mystery of The Doomed House.” Another of the thrilling kind performed at the same place—“Anselmo, The Accursed; or, The Bloody Dagger of The Skeleton Hand;” and another, which was actually headed on the bills A Terrific Hit! entitled, “The Assassin Monk; or, The Spectre of The Mysterious Cavern.”

Where is the young playgoer whose imagination would not be excited on perusing the bill announcing either of the above pieces, to revel in the exciting anticipation of beholding the strange revelations concomitant with dark galleries, trap-doors, and secret vaults?

Each a deep piece where much is to avenge,
Where the “first heavy” hoarsely cries “Revenge!”
Where murdering monks emerge from secret cells,
And ghosts from vaults where dreary darkness dwells;
Where bandit captains lovely maidens bear
To rocky caves illum’d by torches’ glare;
Or black assassin in a blacker cloak,
At dead of night inflicts the deadly stroke;

Or heroine wakening in a vault's deep gloom,
 Or yet discover'd by a moonlit tomb;
 Where heroes stab themselves and then expire,
 Or sudden vanish in a sheet of fire.

In such pieces as we have named, it is highly essential that the heavy business should preponderate, for it will be found that the most successful melodramas are considerably spiced with "deeds of dreadful note."

We remember some years ago, with some friends, being present at the performance of a melodrama, the title of which has escaped us, in which one of the characters, who rejoiced under the appellation of *Caleb*, had much heavy business to do. He was as dark-looking a villain as ever handled cold steel, and his voice was one of the most harsh, inharmonious, and consequently for the character, the most effective we ever heard, not even forgetting the sepulchral tones of the celebrated O. Smith. We cannot recal the precise number of the *dramatis personæ* to whom this truculent fellow administered a *quietus* during the course of the piece, but well remember being struck with the fact, that master *Caleb* never appeared but he slaughtered his man; such a desperado never was, no matter who came across his path. The plot was so arranged that *Caleb* had a host of enemies, long and short, big and little, on his own private account, besides others, whom for sums of gold he had pledged himself to introduce to his dagger. There was one scene of a forest, in which a Captain Somebody had lost his way, and whilst he was conveying this piece of intelligence to the audience, it occurred to us that if the captain did not speedily "move on" *Caleb* would be with him. Scarcely had we made the remark to one of our friends, when sure enough that black phizzed gentleman emerged from behind a tree and accosted the captain. It was an anchor to a needle that *Caleb* would tickle his ribs with the well-seasoned blade with which we had seen him let out the elixir of life of so many. The captain, as a matter of course, on being accosted by the new comer, liked not the looks of the fellow, which was not very surprising, and would have been less so had he known as much as we did about him.

"Yes," we exclaimed, "Caleb will astonish him!"

But whilst we were cogitating whether robbery would instigate him, or whether the object would be merely to keep his hand in practice, speculation was at once removed by the desperado exclaiming aside,

"Ha, *Captain Brown!* 'twas from his regiment I deserted; should he recognise me—death and hell! Ha, I have it!" and, as we expected, out came the dagger, and in less than a jiffy *Captain Brown* received the said dagger in his brisket, after *Caleb's* most approved method of delivery.

Another of these performances which we witnessed struck us as offering a very fair illustration of what we would call "The Thrilling Tommy of the Drania." In the piece to which we allude, up to the last act, there had not been a solitary case of slaughter. The author has reserved all his strong effects for the last scene to form a tableaux of overpowering interest. As the plot became developed, we saw that there was some very serious business to come, and great things to be crowded into a brief period, for some half-dozen or more had throughout the piece been vowing deadly revenge against each other.

By one of those strange coincidences rarely known in every-day life, but very frequently on the stage, there had been several assignations

made by the various *dramatis personae* to meet at some ruins at the hour of midnight. It was evident from this that there would be some queer business going on ; for it was well known that *Marmaduke* and *Sir Thomas*, *Black Ned* and the *Dutch Skipper*, *Frederick* and *Isabella*, and one or two more, had, during the piece, been at sixes and sevens, and all actuated, more or less, for and against each other.

We will not attempt to unravel the plot, the why and wherefore of the strange doings ; suffice it that we give a description of the thrilling tableaux.

The last scene was an old ruined abbey, beside which stood a blasted tree, revealed by the light of a moon just emerging from a mass of black clouds. The curtain rose upon this scene to slow music, and the *Dutch Skipper* shortly entered, saying something about the cold night ; a topic which he soon changed to speak of the suns of gold which he was to receive from *Sir Thomas* for keeping back the boy. Approaching footsteps are heard.

“ Ha,” exclaims the skipper, “ ‘tis *Sir Thomas* !”

But, of course, instead of the gentleman expected, it proves to be somebody else,—no other, indeed, than *Marmaduke*, who instantly recognises the *Dutchman*, as the villain who stole and conveyed the rightful heir to sea. Revenge—*Marmaduke* and the *Skipper* draw—they fight,—riddle diddle (Tommy) music,—a whistle is heard—*Marmaduke* falls stabbed to the heart ; and then enters *Black Ned*, who rushes to the foot-lights, and almost breathless, communicates to the audience that he is suffering from the pangs of remorse, the result of having assisted to murder the present baronet’s brother, and stolen the son away ; and, having received a refreshing sound of applause from the gods, proceeds to attack his old ally in villainy, the *Dutch Skipper*.

After a good deal of slashing work, to which the music maintains an appropriate accompaniment, *Black Ned* serves the skipper as the skipper had served *Marmaduke*. At this period, *Sir Thomas* rushes in pale and haggard. It should be here observed that the *Dutch Skipper*, in the act previous, had revealed to *Sir Thomas*, that *Black Ned* had been playing him treacherous ; that the boy he had not murdered, but protected and brought him up under an assumed name ; that he was in the neighbourhood, intending to assert his rights,—preparing, with the evidence of *Black Ned*, to charge the baronet with the murder of his, the rightful heir’s, father. This will sufficiently account for the baronet looking so haggard and desperate ; nor will it be thought surprising that in such an extremity he should commence a vigorous attack on *Black Ned*, rendering the contest which ensued very exciting by drawing a pistol with his left hand from his breast in the midst of their engagement with swords, and blowing out the brains of his antagonist, who dies within a little distance of the foot-lights, after the most approved melo-dramatic style of giving up the ghost. *Frederick*, the rightful heir, at this interesting moment emerges from the ruins ; and *Sir Thomas*, mistaking him for something not mortal, staggers backwards, gasping out with shortened breath, words which intimate that he regards the last-comer as a spirit from the dead, the ghost of his murdered brother ; but speedily rallying, and recognising the youth as the heir who has come across his path, to dispossess him of his wealth, and to convict him of crime, with a loud

"Ha, ha!" rushes upon him, and after a brief struggle transfixes his weapon in the breast of his second victim.

There now lay dead on the stage, *Marmaduke*, *Black Ned*, and the young heir; so much slaughter was, perhaps, never so condensed before; quite enough for one piece might be imagined; but no, for just as *Sir Thomas* had settled *Master Frederick*, in rushed *Isabella*, pistol in hand, and, taking the villain baronet in flank, shot him dead on the spot. Throwing herself on the lifeless form of *Frederick*, her lover, this spirited heroine next intimated to the audience that she was possessed of a phial containing poison; and, what was more, that she intended to take it; proving as good as her word by swallowing the potion, whilst the curtain descended to slow and appropriate music. That which we have been describing we would call the "Thrilling Dramatic Tommy!"

"Lofty Dramatic Tommy" is presented in a performance wherein some noble fellow, who has, of course, suffered much from adversity, spouts sorrow and sentiment; and who magnanimously refuses to receive relief, or be extricated from his difficulties by the sacrifice of a tittle of his proud and noble spirit. The pathetic when some fair angel of earth parts from her lover, who, through the machinations of a villain is unjustifiably condemned to a felon's death. The pathetic generally tells well at that particular crisis, when the bell is heard to toll, with the officer of the guard pointing the way to the place of execution, the mute anguish of the victim, and the hysterical screams of his betrothed. These, in combination, attain the very acme of the pathetic Tommy, although some may consider it more touching when the lady stands in the relation of wife to the condemned one, with the introduction of a child which, as the melancholy procession crosses the stage, lisps out the affecting inquiry,

"Where is papa going?"

Blowing up the citadel,—red and blue fire,—shouts from the victorious besiegers,—entrance of the true and virtuous prince,—and death of the tyrant, with a strong background of soldiers and civilians forming an imposing tableau,—presents "Tommy" in grandeur. But we must pause; this paper has grown to a length which we never contemplated, although the subject is all but inexhaustible. If the illustrations we have given do not strike with their truthfulness, and as exemplifying the appropriateness of the appellation of "Tommy," we feel assured that to continue would not effect their object. We will, therefore, conclude with this observation, that in the event of the reader laying down our essay with the remark that "there is nothing in it," the writer will, in such case, certainly escape the designation of "Tommy" being applied to his production.

THE ROSE QUEEN.

A TALE OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

BY THE REV. JAMES BANDINEL.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRINCESS ALETHÈ.

READER! did you never hear of the Princess Alethè? If so, I can only pity you for your lamentable ignorance, and assure you, that if you will listen to me, you shall not long remain in such an unhappy predicament. Never heard of the Princess Alethè! Well: *sic transit gloria mundi!* There was a time, not merely during the bloom of her youth and beauty—nay, not merely during her life, but for many hundred years after her death, when every man, woman, and child, from the banks of the Dwina to those of the Xenil, was as well acquainted with the Princess Alethè, her beauty, her virtue, and her strange history, as with the village may-pole or the old church tower. But people are grown forgetful now-a-days: they think of nothing but themselves, and their own appetites, and their own interests. The days of chivalry have passed away, the age of romance has given place to the age of reason—our very infants learn to count on their tiny fingers ere they can speak—our very poets prefer a draft upon Drummonds to a draught from the Castalian spring. No pilgrims now set forth with scrip and wallet—no wandering knights seek hapless captives, to release them from their bonds. The only scrip men carry now-a-days is the scrip of a railway company; the only bonds they look to are Pennsylvanian insecurities. It is not, therefore, after all, so very wonderful that even you, my dear reader, raised as you undoubtedly are above the level of the nineteenth century, by the monthly perusal of the first periodical of the day, should never have heard of the Princess Alethè. You see I have repeated her name several times already, for it is rather a peculiar name, and I wish you to become quite familiar with it before you hear anything more about her. So you shall have it once again.

The Princess Alethè was, at the period at which my story begins, just seventeen years old, all but one day. Seventeen all but one day is a very charming age; and there were at the time in question a great many extremely pretty girls of that age. At least, their fathers and mothers thought so; and, what is more to the purpose, they thought so themselves. And, of course, they must have been the best judges, for they had looked at themselves in the clear still water much oftener and much longer than any one else had done. We are bound, therefore, to believe, on their evidence taken *speciatim* and *seriatim*, that at the time in question there was a most extraordinary and unprecedented number of lovely young creatures just emerging into early womanhood.

Amongst all the maidens of that day, however, there was none to compare in any point, or in any degree, with the Princess Alethè; if they were beautiful, she was beauty's self—if they each possessed one or more exquisite charms of person, or of mind, she combined them all; and what is still more extraordinary is, that, whereas in establishing the loveliness of her contemporaries, we have been obliged to rely principally (and in many cases entirely) on their own evidence, the testimony

of the Princess Alethè is all against herself, and in order to prove her the peerless beauty that we declare her to have been, we must search through all the musty records of that age—we must appeal to high and low, rich and poor, knight and minstrel, chief and vassal, learned and unlearned, young and old, ere we can collect all the requisite statements. We have done so, and we find that, with the single exception of her own voice, they all agree in proclaiming her to be without an equal or a rival. And though her own opinion might at first sight appear to possess some weight, we have, after long and careful examination of manuscripts, discovered one circumstance which entirely invalidates the princess's claim to be heard in her own cause. Dear reader! Lovely reader! Can you believe me? She never looked at herself in her mirror. Yes, alone of all the maidens of her day, she never had recourse to golden speculum or breezeless pool, for the purpose of contemplating her own loveliness.

And lovely she was—lovely as a soft, clear, bright, warm day of early summer. Her eyes were as large, and rich, and soft, as those of the stag; and yet as clear, and bright, and pure, and deep, as the fountain which the sun shines on but cannot fathom. Her brow!—material images are incapable of describing it. Its full contour, its noble height, its calm tranquillity, told of a lofty soul, a powerful mind, and a peaceful conscience. Her cheek!—a pearl glowing in the earliest sunbeam of morning may best express its hue and its transparency. Her lips!—THE ROSE QUEEN herself might have been jealous of them: she was not so, however, as you shall see. Her smile!—it was but the accentless voice of her heart, all joy, and love, and goodness, and kindness. Her rich dark ringlets fell in gentle, yet majestic beauty, over a neck and bosom which painters and sculptors might emulate in vain, and even the poet feebly image forth. Her whole form was symmetry—her every action grace.

And she was just seventeen! all but, that is to say; for she wanted one day to complete her seventeenth year. To-morrow she was to *come out!* Yes! even in those days young ladies had to come out, and young gentlemen too for that matter. The young ladies always, when practicable, came out on their seventeenth birthday; the young gentlemen at different ages—none being ever permitted to associate with the brave, or dally with the fair, until he had numbered twenty years, and slain a bear, or boar, or at least a wolf.

Now, Alethè, strange to say, was not at all pleased at the idea of leaving her retirement—she was not, I assure you. Knowing that this statement was likely to be called in question, I have taken great pains to investigate it, and I beg to refer my readers, of both sexes, to the following irrefragable testimonies:—"Treue acoit of ye erley yrs of ye pairlesse p.c.sse. Alethe. British Musaeum, Grimmaean Collection. No. 7645, f 123, & f 222 b." "Veritable nar" of ye adduentyrs of ye Pesse Aleye. Bodleian Library—Percian Room. No. 3732, f 32 b, f 35, f 37 & f 127 b."

Having these, as well as many other equally indubitable authorities to fall back upon, I have not the slightest hesitation in reiterating the startling assertion, that the Princess Alethè was not at all pleased with the idea of leaving her retirement. When she found the day approaching, and saw all the preparations that were making for the high festival to be held on the occasion, she begged her father to allow her to remain one year longer in obscurity. King Alured, however, though generally in-

dulgent was always firm, and in the present instance his daughter's intrigues were unavailing. And at length it was determined, that, as the princess grieved so deeply over her waning childhood, and suffered so much from the sight of all that was going forward, she should, upon the day previous to her seventeenth birthday, celebrate the morrow by anticipation, as she had been wont to celebrate her former birthdays, namely, by spending the hours from sunrise to sunset with her playfellows in the soft glades of the deep forest of Idruna, the outskirts of which extended to within a quarter of a mile of the city of Arlstadt, her father's capital.

So about an hour before sunrise—for early rising was universal among the Teutons of those days, and the princess had always hitherto been in the habit of commencing the enjoyments of her birthday by seeing the sun rise over the deep cleft in the distant Alff Mountains—her whole train was ready to start. The princess herself led the party on a milk-white palfrey, slender, swift, soft-mouthed, and sure-footed; her young female companions, twenty-four in number, all remarkable for their loveliness, following on piebald ponies, her friend, the Lady Alice, riding next to her. By her side rode her great uncle, Sir Reginald, an aged warrior, who had the especial charge of the princess's person and of everything that belonged to her; and the train of maidens was environed by two lines of knights, twenty-four in each column, with two behind to bring up the rear.

These fifty knights demand a few words to themselves, inasmuch as they formed a peculiar feature of the court to which they belonged. They were neither young nor handsome, but, on the contrary, old and ugly; there was not one amongst them who would not have frightened a young lady of the present day into fits. In fact, whenever it chanced, as chance it sometimes would, that any of the princess's guard died, or became bed-ridden, or otherwise unfit for service, a proclamation was issued that before a certain day testimonials were to be delivered to Prince Reginald by all who wished to present themselves as candidates for the vacant commission. The testimonials were to certify that the aspirant was brave, honest, loyal, true, and extremely ugly. On the day after that on which they had been sent in, the testimonials were examined by the prince and twelve other warriors of high renown, and those only were selected whose courage appeared pre-eminent—whose honour was without reproach, and whose ugliness seemed, as far as the documents in question were concerned, utterly unimpeachable. The numbers having been thus diminished, Sir Reginald named another day, and appointed a tribunal, consisting of single ladies of a certain age, before whom the candidates were to appear. On the day in question, the spinsters took their seats, and the knights were summoned one by one into their presence; this was done twice, so that the fair judges might have ample opportunity for arriving at a decision. If on the second inspection any of the examiners thought any of the examinees sufficiently good-looking to be her partner for life, she was at liberty to take him; and the king, in such case, always gave her a handsome portion. This process, we are told, generally diminished the number of knights by the precise number of ladies, and the examination then went on with the remainder, the ugliest of whom was selected. A modern republican, especially if a woman-hating bachelor, might deem this appropriation of the knights by the spinsters a violation of the rights of man; but the politicians of that day contended, that the candidates were aware of the conditions before they submitted to the ordeal; and

that no one was justified in appearing before the awful tribunal who was not frightful enough to send the stoutest-hearted woman into hysterics, and freeze the gentlest emotions of the most susceptible bosom. They added, that there was still a resource left ; for, if the knight pertinaciously preferred the service of the youthful to the love of the adult maiden, he was permitted to cut off his nose, and thus become *facile princeps*. An eye-witness tells us, that twenty-five out of the fifty knights were noseless. As, however, this statement, in common with others of the same character, is not corroborated by a single contemporary authority, we cannot vouch for its authenticity.

Well, as we before observed, they were all mounted, the princess on her white palfrey with housings of gold, her maidens on their piebald ponies with trappings of silver, and the brave and ugly knights on their jet-black war horses, with their accoutrements of steel, when, lo and behold, as ill-luck would have it, Sir Gerard, with the wall eye, and Sir Gideon with the carbuncle nose—the most highly trusted of the whole corps—fell from their horses in a fit of apoplexy. What was to be done? All was confusion. The princess was much discomposed. Who would not be on such an occasion? Her maidens, with the exception of Lady Alice, began to shriek, and seemed inclined to devote themselves solely to this vocal exhibition; the ugly knights dismounted by common consent, and their steeds, having just received an extra feed all round, proceeded to neigh loudly, to kick, and even to plunge.

Whilst all this was going on, the tumult was yet further increased, by the sudden and unexpected arrival of two knights, each rapidly spurring at the head of a small retinue, from exactly opposite directions. They were both well mounted, well caparisoned, and well armed.

Sir Edred of Drontheim, Knight of the Red Dragon, was the son of Oscar of Drontheim, a renowned sea king, by the beautiful Zara, a Moorish princess, whom he had carried off from the coast of Barbary, in one of those expeditions which made the Scandinavian fleets for some centuries the terror of three quarters of the world. He was tall and powerfully made, with a commanding carriage. His features, though dark, were strikingly handsome, and their expression seemed to combine the fierce heroism of Norway with the wild fire of Morocco. None, indeed, could gaze long upon that countenance without feeling that it belonged to one who possessed high powers and almost ungovernable passions.

Sir Eustace of Rheinfels, Knight of the Golden Eagle, seemed almost too fair for masculine beauty; yet there was a proud determination in his deep-blue eye, a royal majesty in his chiselled features, which compelled respect. He had been early instructed in the Christian faith by his uncle Aelfric, a noble Teuton, who, having himself received the truth, had devoted the whole of his time and energy to its diffusion amongst the wild tribes who at that time inhabited the country lying between the Rhine and the Vistula.

The two strangers immediately requested to attend the princess. Alured at first demurred, thinking that it was neither proper in itself, nor fair to his other guests, to allow two such handsome cavaliers to accompany Alethè until she had made her formal appearance in the gay world. He did not like, however, to offend the knights, for the fame of Sir Edred had spread throughout the whole of Europe; and the renown of Eustace, as well as the high estimation in which the king held Aelfric,

rendered him unwilling to refuse him. He remembered, too, that an old witch had once warned him never to allow his daughter to visit the Forest of Idruna without fifty armed knights in her train. With sundry misgivings, therefore, he consented, not, however, without charging Prince Reginald to keep close to his niece during the whole of the day.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOREST OF IDRUNA.

IT was a beautiful morning, that 18th of May, in the year 777. Much time had been lost by the apoplectic seizure of the two veterans, brought on, as is supposed, by their having each quaffed on the preceding night three brimming flagons of alimeth, a glorious compound, for which King Alured was peculiarly famous. It was formed by the mixture, in equal quantities, of mead, from the banks of the Severn, mountain-dew, from the Frith of Forth, and strong beer, from the Upper Danube, and was never given out except on high occasions. In the present instance, the peculiar cellar had been opened in honour of the princess's approaching outcoming; and the two knights, having contrived to appropriate a barrel of the precious liquor, proved the extent of their loyalty by drinking three bumpers to the health of their lovely young mistress.

It was a beautiful morning, we said; and so it was, as the eastern heavens became every instant of a brighter, deeper ruby, and cast a rich warm glow on the long and lofty line of grim black mountains, which rose in stern and barren magnificence behind the eternal Forest of Idruna. For a moment the princess reined up her palfrey, and gazed upon the kindling scene, then plunged at once into the nearest glade, and pressed onward at full speed to the Birthday Knoll. She was not too late. She had just time to reach the well-loved spot, and gaze upon the rich woodland sea which spread for at least fifty miles before her, to the Alff Mountains, when the sun in all his glory rose slowly through the deep opening in the lofty range, and filled both earth and heaven with his golden light, save where the ebon shadow of the sullen mountains rested like the pall of night upon the vales beneath.

“What is that?” said she, speaking without changing the direction of her eyes. “What is that shining black object which juts out from the Northern Mountain, and intercepts a portion of the sun?”

“It looks like a castle,” said a clear, rich voice beside her. “Yes, it must be.”

She started, for she had not noticed that, in the hurry and confusion of the advance, Sir Eustace had succeeded in gaining her side.

“Looks like a castle, sir knight!” joined in a full, deep voice. “Methinks your eyes must be little practised in knightly adventures if they cannot see, that *it is a castle*.”

“It is so very distant,” interposed the princess ere Eustace could reply, “that it requires a sight beyond that of mortal man to ascertain the fact from this spot.”

“Pardon me, lady,” replied Sir Edred, “your own retinue, if I have heard aright, has hitherto been so entirely composed of the maimed and the aged, that you are scarcely aware how far a good knight and true, in the flower of youth or prime of manhood, is expected to see.”

“You pay but scanty courtesy,” cried Sir Eustace, “to the eyes of the Princess Alethè, jewels without compare, stars without rival, suns before which your orb looks dim.”

The knight saw his mistake, and ground his teeth in silence; then, recovering himself, rejoined: "The true heart, lady, is seldom coupled with the fluent tongue. But, as to the point at issue, yon speck is a castle, the Castle of Schreckenstein."

"Strange that I should never have noticed it before! Have you ever remarked it, Alice?"

"It has been raised by Sir Hildebrand, lady, within the last twelve months."

The group was now increased by the arrival of Prince Reginald, who, taking his niece aside, and assisting her to dismount, commenced a homily to her on her leaving her escort in company with two strangers. It was not very severe, for the old warrior loved the beautiful girl too fondly to treat her with anything approaching to severity. Indeed, who could have been severe upon Alethè? and it was merely in obedience to her father's strict injunction that the old man admonished her of her indiscretion. How long the homily might have lasted we know not, for it must be acknowledged that the prince was rather inclined, at times, to be prosy, especially with his niece, whose gentle nature never permitted her to show, and seldom even to feel, fatigue on such occasions. But, before the princess had time to interrupt his exhortation by any vindication of her own conduct, uncle and niece were startled by the loud barking of a dog. The princess was without fear; and pre-eminently so with regard to the brute creation; for, besides that she was naturally courageous in the highest degree, she had never yet seen the animal, however savage, that did not pay homage to her loveliness and purity. More than once, indeed, had she been in the greatest apparent peril from the ferocious beasts which, during the eighth century, abounded in every European forest; but no sooner had the foe reached her immediate presence, than, awed by a power against which it made no attempt to struggle, instead of devouring or destroying her, it paused in full career, and after a long and intent gaze, retired to the depths of its native wilderness.

Alethè, therefore, followed the sound, and soon found herself in a romantic dell surrounded by high bushes, and approachable only by one narrow inlet. On the other side stood a magnificent bloodhound of enormous size—his eyes glaring, his lips foaming; whilst Sir Edred was just in the act of raising his boar-spear to strike the noble animal to the earth.

"Hold! hold!" cried Alethè; "do not, I beseech you, harm that dog. Pray tell me, sir knight, what is the matter."

"Nothing, madam, nothing. As I was seeking for a flower that might be worthy of your acceptance, I chanced to see yonder ROSE, and was on the point of plucking it, when that fierce animal prevented me. I endeavoured to drive him off, and, not being able to induce him to quit the position which he has taken up, was just going to punish his insolence when your highness appeared. Look at THE ROSE!"

And she did look at the rose! and who could look at it and not love it? I have seen many beautiful roses in my day, for I love the rose right well; but never saw I such a rose as that which now glowed in all its matchless beauty before the Princess Alethè. It was a moss-rose, not quite full blown; but as she gazed on it, the leaves seemed to open more and more and blush a deeper hue, whilst the air around became every moment more exquisitely perfumed. She looked, and looked, and looked; and the dog began to whine piteously.

But her thoughts were suddenly turned into another direction; for Sir Eustace, who from a short distance had seen her enter the thicket, now came up, and perceiving the rose, exclaimed—

“Why does the Princess Alethè delay to press her sister to her bosom?”

“My sister?”

“Yes, lovely princess. Is not yonder rose thy sister? As thou art among maidens, so is she among flowers, lovely without compare. As thou hast hitherto lived in peaceful seclusion, and, if report speaks true, even now shrinkest from the high doom which awaits thee—”

“Enough! enough!” cried Alethè, bursting into tears. “Live my sister! Live in the wild wood, free and alone! I will never tear thee from thy simple paradise to that gaudy scene which is alike distasteful to thee and to me. Live and be blest! And do you, sir knight, spare that noble dog.”

“Your will is law, madam,” replied Sir Edred, sullenly; and the party having retreated from the thicket, the princess issued strict orders to her retinue that no one should enter the inlet, or otherwise approach the dell. All obeyed her command implicitly, but the gloom which had gathered on Sir Edred’s brow seemed to communicate itself to the rest of the party.

The princess, seeing both the effect and the cause, entered into conversation with her northern guest, as they partook together of their early meal, and the darkness soon gave place to a wild and brilliant light that shone from lip, and eye, and cheek, and brow, as though he were inspired, as in answer to her simple, but opportune questions, he told of the wonders of the northern wilds and the western ocean, and related those almost incredible achievements which had made his name honoured and feared throughout the known world.

Alethè was interested, as a girl of her age would more especially be by his narrative. And Prince Reginald began to feel uneasy. He concluded the meal, therefore, rather abruptly, and drew off the whole body of cavaliers, leaving the princess and her maidens to those girlish sports which had on previous occasions occupied the greatest part of the birthday. At the appointed time all again met for refreshment, and on this occasion Sir Eustace sat by Alethè, and Sir Edred opposite. This was as the prince wished it, and, rising in high good humour, he proposed that the knights should escort the ladies to a beautiful spot at some distance, then separate as before, and all meet at the Birthday Knoll at half an hour before sunset. Sir Reginald, however, made sure of the young guests by inviting them to accompany him to the intended scene of a future hunt, whilst the main body of his knights halted at a respectful distance from their mistress, and small bodies of two or three rode about in different directions.

At length the declining sun warned the whole party that it was high time to retrace their steps. All had, however, so much enjoyed themselves—the prince had been so very anxious to execute his stratagem, and the princess felt so loath to conclude the last day of her girlhood—that the sun had already neared the horizon ere the whole party had reached the place of rendezvous. Alethè paused, and almost involuntarily turned her eyes to the break in the mountains, whence she had that morning beheld the sun arise in all his youthful splendour. She looked intently; for his setting beam shone with a bright, and, as it seemed to her, a

lurid light upon the object asserted by Sir Edred to be the castle of Schreckenstein.

She had not, however, gazed long, when her uncle's voice announced that all was ready. The party formed, with the princess at their head, and had just commenced their return, in good order, when the alarm was given that their path was beset.

"And who dares beset my path," said the Princess Alethè, "within a few miles of my father's dwelling?"

A stranger now came forward. His visor entirely concealed his countenance. His form was tall and robust, considerably exceeding the common height and size of men; his steed, though by no means handsome, being sandy-coloured, with black mane and white hoofs, was of a powerful make; and the whole appearance, both of man and beast, betokened strength and determination.

"Sir Hildebrand, of Schreckenstein," said he, addressing the princess, "has sent me to beseech, in his name, your heart and hand. And he has deputed this gallant company to act as your escort through the perilous wilds of the Forest of Idruna."

"He who seeks my hand," replied the princess, "must seek it from my father—must seek it in person."

"Nay, gentle lady! but thy father is of a morose and selfish disposition, and might not feel disposed to part with such a treasure; therefore, beautiful princess, has my master sent me to bring thee to him with all speed. Wherefore I pray thee to accompany me without more ado; since if thou decline to do so willingly, thou shalt do so against thy will; and if these valiant knights make any show of resistance, the carion birds shall have a rich repast to-morrow in honour of thy birthday and thy wedding, lovely one."

Alethè calmly, though indignantly, desired the envoy to depart; and Sir Reginald, placing the ladies in the midst, and the princess in the centre of all, determined to cut his way through the opposing force. He soon found that the enemy far outnumbered his own troop. Nothing daunted, however, he made a bold charge, and so great was the effect of his lances and of the compact mode in which the whole band was arrayed, that the numbers were almost equalised, though several of his braver knights had fallen and others were severely wounded. A furious sword-fight now commenced, in which Sir Reginald, despite of his great age, nobly vindicated the fame which he had acquired near fifty years before when fighting against the Moslem in the armies of the Byzantine empire. Sir Edred carried dismay and destruction wherever he came, and Sir Eustace proved himself as invincible as youth, strength, and skill must ever be when inspired by dauntless courage and ennobled by high feeling and high principle.

The princess, seeing how matters stood, resolved to make a bold stroke for freedom, and putting her palfrey to full gallop, burst through the combatants, followed by the most venturesome of her train.

This heroic manœuvre, however, though at first successful, seemed likely to be unavailing. For the leader of the assailants having felled Sir Reginald with a heavy blow, and in a most unknightly manner inflicted a mortal wound on Sir Edred's steed, galloped after the princess, reached her, dragged her brutally from her palfrey, and placing her like a child across his saddlebow, dashed down an easterly glade, and made the best of his way towards the Castle of Schreckenstein. The princess

shrieked loudly, but her cries became every moment less and less audible to her friends, none of whom had succeeded in following her, save the Knight of the Golden Eagle, who, mounted on a charger of extreme fleetness, continually gained on her pursuer, and called upon him to turn and defend himself. His loudly vociferated challenge attracted the notice of two of the Schreckenstein troop who chanced to be near at hand, and springing through the bushes they placed themselves between their leader and Sir Eustace. Following the base example of their commander, they immediately disabled the noble charger, and the princess saw Sir Eustace fall to the ground, and every hope of rescue depart. It is true, she heard the trumpets of her father's power advancing rapidly to her rescue, and knew that the Lady Alice must have reached Arlstadt in safety, and given the alarm. But of what avail is succour that comes too late?—every moment the distance was increasing, the shades of night were deepening, and the bushes on either side growing denser and denser. And yet, even then, the soft fragrant breeze, that gently moved the roses o'er her head, seemed to breath comfort to her soul. But no! there can be no hope—through the close labyrinths she sees an open glade beyond, and another troop of miscreants halted ready to receive her.

At this instant the thicket seemed stirred as by a hurricane; and one of the largest and tallest bushes rapidly descending, struck the charger in front, and brought both horse and rider to the ground.

“Nay, fair maiden, but thou shalt not thus escape me,” cried her captor, as Alethè, released for a moment from his clutch, sprang to her feet. His hand seized her mantle—she struggled vainly to free herself—and the sound of horsehoofs from the eastward told her that all hope was passed, when a loud howl resounded through the brake, and a bloodhound, of great size and beauty, sprang at his throat. Another moment and he was on the ground, powerless in the grasp of his invincible antagonist.

Alethè looked round—hard by she perceived an opening in the thicket; and no sooner had she entered it than the bushes—they were rose-bushes—closed behind her, so as to present to the pursuers an impervious barrier; and in another moment the noble dog was by her side looking up into her face with an expression of the deepest gratitude.

Soon sounded in her ears the clash of arms—then came the shouts of the pursuers and the cries of the pursued—and then, above all other sounds, arose the voice of her father calling for his daughter. As he reached the spot where the hostile leader had fallen, a gentle breeze lifted the boughs of the thicket where she had been sheltered, and showed her reclining on a mossy bank, with the bloodhound beside her.

The four-footed hero did not wait to hear his praises sounded by her lovely lips, but bounding through a gap in the bushes disappeared at once and for ever. The king clasped his child in his arms, and, escorted by a goodly retinue, amongst whom she rejoiced to see, apparently uninjured, her uncle and the two young strangers, the princess returned to her father's palace.

CHAPTER III.

THE VISION.

On reaching the palace, Alethè was welcomed by her female train, and especially by Alice, whose courage and presence of mind were lauded by the whole court, and most of all by her fondly attached mistress. She sought at once her own apartments, and having despatched her toilet as

quickly as possible, took the soothing draught which the royal physician had prepared, and soon fell into a deep slumber. It seemed, however, to be a troubled one; and yet, from the smile that often played upon her features, it would appear to have been not altogether painful. Alice, who lay awake for some time after the princess had fallen asleep, observed these symptoms, and with some pressing prevailed upon her mistress to make the following confession:—

“ It seemed to me,” said Alethè, “ that no sooner had I laid my head upon my pillow, and closed my weary eyes to sleep, than a sound of distant music reached me, borne by a gentle breeze that mingled the rustling of boughs and the purling of brooks with its silvery tones. Nearer and nearer the harmony approached; though it seemed rather like self-born music wafted on the wings of the wind* than the production of any minstrel of earth. Slowly and sweetly the waves of sound drew nearer, and as the melody became clearer, I was conscious of a delicious scent; till, at length, the air around me was filled at once with music and fragrance. So fatigued, however, did I feel with the day’s toils and perils, that even in my dream I declined to open my eyes until the floating sounds moulded themselves into words.”

It was with great difficulty, and after much solicitation from the Lady Alice, and much blushing on her own part, that the princess at length was prevailed upon to repeat the following verses:—

“ ‘ Unheard be the sob, and unbreathe’d be the sigh,
 For the Queen of the Roses she cometh to bless;
 And wherever our Rosabel deigns to draw nigh,
 Who can think of aught else but her loveliness?’

“ ‘ Sweet Rosabel dwells in the wild wood alone,
 Alone in her fragrance, alone in her bloom,
 And the wild flowers are kneeling around her throne,
 Her smile their reward, and her coldness their doon.’

“ ‘ The purple Violet kneeleth there,
 And so doth the Cowslip of downcast eye,
 And the quiet Primrose frank and fair,
 Which the moss encircles so lovingly.’

“ ‘ And the Windflower trembles with conscious love,
 And the Daisy discloses her sinless gold,
 And the Woodbine bends from her bower above,
 And the Clematis meekly looks forth from the wold.’

“ ‘ And the Brione stretches her slender arms,
 And the Speedwell laughs with his bright blue eye,
 And the Orchis glows in conscious charms,
 And the Wildgrass breathes its silvery sigh.’

“ ‘ And the Hawthorn smiles his dazzling smile,
 And calmly muses the Asphodel,
 But smiling or sighing, they, all the while,
 Are all of them thinking of Rosabel.’

“ ‘ For she is the Queen of the Forest Flowers,
 And they joyfully bow at their Sovereign’s throne;
 As thou art the Star of these earthly bower,
 Whose sceptre all eyes and all hearts shall own.’

“ ‘ Then open thy matchless eyes, sweet maid,
 Her equal alone in thy loveliness,—
 For she whom thou savedst in yonder glade,
 The Queen of the Roses, she cometh to bless.’

“ ‘ She cometh to bless her Sister dear,
 And happy the maiden by Rosabel blest,
 For myriads of vassals are ever near
 To study her wish, and perform her behest.’

"Thus urged," proceeded Alethè, "I opened my eyes, and beheld a sight which will ever remain vividly impressed on my memory, though I can scarcely give you the faintest idea of it in words. The whole room seemed filled with waves of light, some of them of the hue of the violet, others that of the honeysuckle, others were of a bright green colour, like budding leaves, others of a deeper hue, others again golden, others silvery, and others assuming the various shades of the rose, from the faint hue of the maiden's blush to the deepest damask. All of these waves appeared full of fragrance, and as the breezes stirred them they each gave forth the sweetest sounds conceivable; now rising into a silvery cadence of deep and wizard harmony, now dying away again, into almost silence,—and yet it was not silence, one felt the presence of music though one could not hear it."

"I gazed for some time bewildered on the beautiful scene, unable to decide whether it were fancy or reality that moulded the waves before me, now into flowers, and now into angel forms of more than human loveliness."

"At length a soft voice close to me uttered the word 'Sister,' and looking up I beheld a form, such as no waking eye was ever blest with contemplating. She reminded me of the description which that young Greek harper gave of the Goddess Aphrodítè,—only that she was far more beautiful, and there seemed to be such a purity as well as grace in every movement of her person, or tone of her voice, that I could almost have fallen down and worshipped her."

"'Naiden,' said she, 'I am the Rose Queen. I come to return you my deepest thanks for the service which you rendered to me this morning; to warn you of coming evil; and to assure you that whenever you are in need of assistance, you shall receive it at my hands; or—or—', here her voice faltered.

"'Or at mine,' said a voice of equal melody and of deeper tone. And, as I looked in the direction whence the sound came, I beheld a slender figure in male attire, holding in his hand that which I should have taken for a lance, had it not been so slight.

"'True,' said the Rose Queen; 'Sir Faramond of the Red, Red Rose will undertake to do battle for you against ~~any~~ denizen of earth or air.'

"'Ay, or of the lower deep either,' added he.

"'He will undertake to do battle for you against all comers, should you ever require his aid; and, powerful and beautiful as you are, you may require it. The clouds even now are darkening around you. Beware! Beware of Schreckenstein! Beware of Edred! Beware even of your uncle, *if he ceases to be himself*. Trust Eustace, the noble knight, and Arnold, the minstrel of the Brocken.'

"'Your words are mysterious,' I replied. 'Can you not speak more plainly?'

"'No; it is not permitted.'

"'At least tell me who and what you are.'

"'I am one of the most powerful of those ~~spirits~~ who resemble the angels in many points, yet who resemble man in these three things:—We are not perfect; we are in a state of probation; and we are (under certain circumstances) subject to death. I and my race rule over the flowers of the forest. Sometimes we manifest ourselves in the loveliest of them. In fact, during the greater part of the year, from sunrise to

sunset, or as long as the flower is naturally awake, we each reside in that flower which is especially under our charge. When it closes, or the sun descends below the horizon, we depart, and either float through the air in waves of fragrant melody, or assume those human forms in which a great portion of our existence is passed. The sylvan retreats which we occupy when animating our chosen flowers are rendered supernaturally obscure to the sight, or impervious to the access of man, except on certain stated occasions, when we are open to approach, and liable to destruction. One of these occasions occurred to-day; and it is only to your gentle kindness that I owe my prolonged life.'

"Nay, not only to me; the noble bloodhound kept the intruder at bay till I arrived. And now it bethinks me I owe my own escape to his courage and opportune assistance. Pray, whither is he gone?"

"He is here," said Sir Faramond. "The lovely Rosabel forgot, in enumerating those points in which our nature agrees with that of man, to mention the most striking of all—namely, *Lore*. I, though no spirit of the forest flowers, but sprung from a sterner race, am a devoted admirer of the Rose Queen."

"The beautiful being whom he had mentioned seemed abashed by the words of her admirer, and, turning her beaming countenance on me, said,

"Farewell, my sister—my sweet sister; and let the events of this day impress upon you, that the Great Father of all Spirits, embodied or disembodied, will never allow the slightest act, or word, or thought of kindness towards any of his creatures to go unrewarded, even in the troubled and murky vale of this world. Love is the universal law of the universe. Happy and wise are they who fulfil it, even in the faintest degree; happiest and wisest they who bear its impress clearly written on their heart. But it is time to depart. Whenever you are in trial or trouble, seek my bower; it will always be accessible to you, provided you bring this in your bosom." And the Rose Queen laid a beautiful rose upon my pillow.

"And here it is!" cried Alice, pointing to the rose as she spoke.

And there it was, sure enough, looking more beautiful than any rose ever did look, excepting always the Rose Queen herself.

"It was no dream, then," said Alethe.

PESTILENCE AND THE GREAT EXHIBITION FOR 1851.*

"FOREWARNED, forearmed," is the appropriate motto adopted by the author of a pamphlet, which expounds that without preparations being made for the sanitary accommodation of the multitude of strangers who may be expected to attend the Great Exhibition of 1851, there will be great danger of some baneful illness breaking out. The author addresses himself to the Prince Consort, as the prime originator of the forthcoming Grand Exhibition, and he says—

You are known to be well versed in history, let History therefore speak to you. Hear her voice, and consider us, as in fact we nearly are, past and forgotten. Please to observe, while men and matter are ever undergoing change, the laws of nature are immutable. And this is one of her great laws, verified by the con-

* The Philosopher's Mite to the Great Exhibition of 1851. Houlston and Stoneman.

cordant testimony of all ages throughout the world,—“Great, sudden human gatherings, domiciliated in a confined space, are liable to be followed by pestilence in the compound ratio of the diversity of the sources from whence they come, the diversity of breed, habits, and diet, and the length of their sojourn in such given confined space—a liability scarcely to be obviated at all if such accumulation be protracted, and, even if continuing for a few weeks, demanding special regulations for the public health.”

It would be a mere senseless display of book-knowledge were we to refer you to the hundreds of instances of pestilence accruing upon great international meetings. Take up what history you like; choose any quarter of the globe, any *siecle*, any nation, any metropolis, any great city, and still the fact will encounter you. You have near you good and truly learned men, who will refer you to the historic proofs that the most widely-spreading and most exterminating pestilences of Great Britain followed upon, and were traceable to, sudden and *en masse* influx of foreigners. But if you will judge for yourself, read the reign of Edward III., and there you will trace the tragic consequences of such influx at the founding of the Order of the Garter. What followed at Windsor? The Black Death, the early history of which is still the subject of intense curiosity among the learned, and has been, within the last few years, reprinted both in Germany and in England. That freak of Edward cost England more than a third of its population.

Again, in 1483, Richmond brought with him, to deliver his country from a so-called tyrant, a motley army of aliens, and thus introduced the Sweating Sickness, developed in the invading army soon after their landing at Milford Haven. In some towns one-half of the population perished by it. If the work of the learned Caius, the founder of Caius College, be too professional for your perusal, you will find that my Lord Bacon, at a subsequent period, embodied an account of it in his great work.

Will you go with us to the East? What have been the consequences of the great Oriental sacred gatherings in that quarter? Please to ask your East India Company how many thousands of deaths by malignant disease were traceable to such national meetings? For Italy, in the mediæval ages, the records of the Medici will suffice. You will there learn how frequently the pest recurred from accidental and forced collections of people, driven from one city to another by the calamities of war; so frequently, indeed, that the mere contingency of approaching risk prompted authority to shut the city gates, and with them the gates of mercy, on their fellow-creatures. And here, Prince, we tremble, while hastily fit before our memory the names of great and good men who were execrated, defamed, nay worse, murdered, because a mob will always concentrate their rage on individuals and stupidity personify the cause of pestilence, instead of tracing it to its complex origin, for which they have not the mind or the patience. Even kings have thus been maligned, and found Honors to immortalise the error. This makes us tremble for your popularity. Is it well merited? What matters? Does not history tell you, that a shadow of a pretence suffices for mob etiology? Search the archives of your fatherland. Do you not call to mind that influx of invaders brought with it pestilence? Thank God! the English are only going to be visited, and not invaded. But does Nature, in her above-recited law, make any exceptions? Does she except those brought together from distant parts to join in the praise of the Deity or in the defence of religion? Ask History again, and she will answer you. Whether of yore, in the temple of Solomon, or in our own time, on the plains of Hindostan, such popular collections, ever found to be dangerous, have demanded classification and division by the Jews in the one instance, and secured the intervention of the Indian Company in the other.

The piety of the good St Louis availed not to save him and a great part of his army from a similar catastrophe. Surely men are not so insensate as to expect an immunity from a law which is not allowed to be inoperative, even when too many are gathered together in His name, as Christian history also suffices to show, and as has been exemplified even in our own time in various parts of Europe? If you dislike to read medical authors, turn to Froissart. If you require modern documents for modern calamities, you can have them from your India House, from your Board of Control, from your Army and Navy Medical Boards. That the sun shines at mid-day is not clearer to our minds than the embryo danger of your monster Exhibition, however noble that monster is intended to be. It is that same law which influenced the introduction of the pestilence of 1483, 1485, 1506, 1517, 1528, 1529—a law as clearly definable as that two multiplied by two make four. It is notable that the second recurrence here cited took place just two years after

all England had offered up prayers and thanksgivings for the withdrawal of what has ever been considered a divine scourge, and just at the period when the short-sighted wisdom of the learned had led them to infer that the calamities of the past were the best guarantee against the danger of the future. The same law influenced the introduction of the plague in 1665; for both restorations brought with them a motley influx of foreigners. Whether moved by the consideration of the jealousy which might accrue from the presence of an army of foreigners, or struck by the repeated examples of pest occurring in his own time, arising out of a contingent *plus* population, that wise and sagacious monarch, Henry IV., dismissed with largess all his alien supporters, and thanking them warmly for the services they had rendered him, remitted them to their vessels at Plymouth, to sail from thence to Brittany,—not allowing them to await either the issue of his contest with Richard, or for his own coronation contingent upon the deposition of that monarch.

All well-informed men are aware that those heavy visitations of ancient times were traceable, like cholera, as coming from Asia; but it is equally notorious, that when international intercourse was limited, throughout four outbreaks, Germany and the Netherlands were exempt, while at the fifth, in these last countries, pest developed itself at the great conference at Marburgh, between Luther and Zwinglius, on transubstantiation,—a curious omen for the present religious tendencies of England.

The author then goes on to show how the centralisation of large armies, and even common assizes have, by the excessive *animalisation* of houses not spacious enough for their ordinary and contingent inhabitants, been the means of exciting sudden outbreaks. He then considers the habits of foreigners visiting London. How they congregate in the purlieus of Leicester-square, where the cupidity of lodging-house keepers induces them to receive an overplus. Upwards of threescore foreigners, he tells us, have been known to lodge, or rather to bundle, in one house in Castle-street, three in a bed. And then he asks—

What number of visitors, may we be allowed to ask, does your Committee expect? We have heard of 40,000. We have heard of 100,000. We have heard of a million. And we think the last a nearer approximation to the probable truth. Patriotism has attracted great bodies of men to her altars. Religious enthusiasm more. But the incentive now held up to the world, if philosophers have understood human nature, will prove that the worshippers of Mammon exceed all the other worshippers on the face of the earth. Tournaments and glory have had their altars in the open air, and have allured their thousands; but this is the age of Mammon, and its votaries will be countless,—their name Legion. Your fine mind has been too severely schooled in philosophy to be swayed by an argument unsupported by facts. Please to observe a whole group of such facts in the according testimony of all nations.

Our philosopher shows that the severest distempers of an epidemical character have travelled from Asia, and that the most violent outbreaks of cholera have arisen from undue and accidental crowdings. And he not only avers that monster collections of masses in confined space, especially when derived from various and distant sources, are commonly found to bring with them all the heterodox materials necessary for pestilential development, in that mystic caldron of human calamity, an overgrown metropolis; but he also says that wise men of all nations have pronounced that every gigantic scheme for human improvement has encountered dire reverses, never contemplated by the benevolent originators. Without going so far as the learned and clever author, and placing much reliance upon untoward coincidences which would seem *a priori* to call into question the benevolence of Providence, we must say that there are statements and arguments in his pamphlet which claim serious attention, and that with him we say, “Forewarned, forearmed.”

THE CONFEDERATES ; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XIX.

LOUD and prolonged peals of laughter rose in noisy, chorus to the dark oak ceiling of the banqueting hall of the palace of Cuylemberg. More than three hundred guests sat at the long, narrow tables ranged round the hall, which was of loftier, and more roomy dimensions than common even in those days. The heavy silver tankards overflowed with the richest and rarest wines. Malvoisy and Cyprus glittered in slender Venetian glasses, whilst in armoriated goblets the ruby vintage of France rivalled the golden tribute of the Rhine. The sumptuous repast was drawing to a close, and the menials had been dismissed, that nothing might check the free flow of hilarity and the unguarded license of the hour.

The eyes of the young then who, for the most part, composed this assembly, were lighted up with an unnatural fire, and their cheeks tinged with a ruddier glow than ever was bestowed by health; but the formidable display of empty wine flasks, piled at intervals between the guests, sufficiently accounted for these appearances! Those among the revellers who had reached the meridian of life—except a few Protestants, whose stern countenances spoke of the struggles for which they were preparing, and others whose names and positions were sufficient to give dignity to any cause they embraced—were men on whose harsh and worn countenances disappointment and debauch had left indelible traces. The majority, however, seemed thoughtless and headlong youths, whose chief delight was the wine-flask, whose chief aim to spend as quickly as possible the surplus of vitality that overfilled their veins.

Florent of Cuylemberg and Louis of Nassau sat on either hand of Brederode; and though two of them at least had passed the rubicon of youth, yet their enjoyment of the passing hour seemed as keen and as careless as that of any there present; but an observing eye might have perceived that, under the appearance of levity, the looks of Brederode were occasionally overcast, and that Louis of Nassau could at times with difficulty repress an abstraction very foreign to his nature. The Count of Cuylemberg alone of the three seemed to enter freely, and without secondary motives or thought, into the pleasures of the moment.

The conversation had hitherto followed the routine of all such meetings; it was now fast reaching a point where mirth was in danger of becoming madness—patriotism a devouring flame—where the most cowardly feel themselves lions, the most hard-hearted have to combat their overflowing sensibilities, the most reserved become loquacious. In short, all were suffering, more or less, under an incipient inebriety which, acting upon diverse natures and temperaments, promised soon to close the eyes of some, and extinguish the few remaining sparks of reason in others.

Towards the middle of one of the tables we have described, a group was eagerly conversing; for they yet maintained sufficient control over themselves to listen to the observations of each other—a ceremony, as the

din around proclaimed, deemed altogether superfluous by many. In the centre of this group sat one of a peculiarly expressive aspect. His erect bearing and air of command, as well as the abruptness of his manners, betrayed the soldier; but there was in his countenance a look of unmitigated austerity, that conveyed a conviction of his tenets to the mind, even before his name had justified it.

"None can fully appreciate the extraordinary qualities of the Prince of Orange," he was saying, whilst his untouched goblet, filled to the brim, was slightly compressed by his fingers, as if mechanically, "but those who like me have the honour and pleasure of being constantly thrown into his society, and of living within the circle of his hospitality."

"Is not he who is now speaking," whispered a gaudily dressed gentleman, whose profusion of pinking and slashing made him not unlike a stuffed parrot—"is not he who is now speaking, John Marnix, Lord of Thoulouse, the rank heretic, who conceives himself equally master of the pen and of the sword, and plays by turns the soldier and the man of letters?"

"The same," answered the person interrogated. "He resides at Breda, in the midst of a nest of heretics like himself, all men of erudition, of whom, by the way, many are here to-day. But hark! he speaks."

"None," continued Thoulouse, "knows better how to win the hearts of all that come within his sphere. It were difficult to say whether his free and princely generosity, or his affability, weigh most in the scale of public esteem."

"Certainly none in the Netherlands," said Eustache Fiennes, Baron d'E-quedra, "can equal the prince in magnificence; even in Brussels the splendour of his establishment and retinue, the pomp and state that surround him, excite, it is said, the jealousy of the regent and the court of Spain; and yet I have heard it confidently asserted that it is nothing compared with what he displays at Breda."

"He holds there *cour plénière*, does he not?" inquired another; "and plays the independent sovereign?"

"He is one," replied Thoulouse, proudly.

"How so?" pursued the same interlocutor. "He is vassal to the emperor for his county of Nassau."

"True," rejoined Marnix; "but his principality of Orange in France is free—there he owes fealty to none."

"Yes," observed a fourth, laughing; "but his freedom in that quarter lies somewhat too near Avignon and France for my taste. The first quarrel, and his principality is packed up in a trice—he cannot defend it."

"He would sacrifice that and more besides for the sake of our rights," said Thoulouse, warmly. "He is a right noble and wise prince, and happy are the lands that owe allegiance to him alone."

"Amen!" responded several in the vicinity of the speakers, and enthusiastic were the shouts with which the health of Orange was drunk, as the toast went round.

"Whom are they drinking up there?" inquired a voice from the next table. "Is it the noble Count of Egmont? Faith, I have been in the camp with him, and have seen him face the jaunty Frenchmen. He took the starch out of their ruffs, I promise you. I was with him at St. Quentin, and a prettier affair I never wish to see."

"I hear them shouting the name of the Prince of Orange," said

another; "but I am all for native heroes. What need have we to cry up so high those whose roots were planted in another soil? Come! let us drink the toast our forefathers drank. 'May the three great houses bloom and flourish for ever—Egmont, the rich; Wassenaer, the old; and Brederode, the noble!'"

Deafening were the clamours with which this popular saying in the Netherlands was received by the assembled nobles, among whom it passed like wildfire, until the beloved names had been duly honoured. At the extremity of the table sat several rakish-looking youths, who either could not catch, or did not understand, what was going forward.

"What on earth are they saying, Florent?" said one, who could scarcely have closed his twentieth year, to one somewhat older than himself, who was straining every muscle to look steady, and endeavouring, though in vain, to obtain a distinct view of his neighbour, and a clear comprehension of what was passing around him.

"Really, I can't tell," he gravely answered. "I can't distinguish. The ship rocks so confoundedly—one can't—the waves are so yellow and thick"—he gazed wistfully as he spoke into a large goblet of Rhenish that stood before him—"so very thick, that one grows quite dizzy."

"Ha! ha! ha! he's gone—clean gone. Poor Florent! He can stand nothing!" shouted another youth by his side. "Now, here am I, at the close of a feast as at the beginning. I'll give you a proof—I'll tell you how much I owe to the Jews to a hair's breadth."

"That's easily done," said a third, laughing; "say everything, and more than you ever possessed, and you'll not be far wrong."

"Do you mean to insult me?" demanded he who had given rise to this retort, and who appeared to have arrived at the quarrelling stage; "if so, I'd have you to know I'm as good a hand at a sword-cut as any man, and by 'r Lady—I—I—"

"Sit down and be quiet, can't you?" interrupted a fourth. "Don't you see that I can't tell my adventures in France, if you make such a noise?"

"Who wishes to hear them?" growled the angry man. "I tell you, the strings of pearls my mother left me, that I used to wear round my bonnet, were worth—were worth—let me see——"

"As much as your acres every bit, I'll be bound," returned the other; "and the weight of either would not encumber a flea's back."

Upon this the ruined gentleman grew outrageous, and would have vented his fury in deeds as well as words, had not the unsteadiness of his limbs, as well as the interference of his friends, prevented him. In the mean time the fourth speaker continued vaunting of the things he had seen at the court of France, at the height of his voice.

"Yes, by our Lady of Hanap! no country can match France. She boasts the loveliest queen and the merriest jester that ever were beheld; and I don't know which did me the most good when I went to Paris, the smiles of the enchanting Mary of Scotland, or the hearty laugh that Brusquet—that half-knave, half-fool—cost me. The queen, one day, invited no end—no end——"

"Pray make an end to that stupid story of yours; don't you see I want to tell——"

"No end," continued the unabashed speaker, "of noblemen and

gentlemen to sup with her ; and—and—and—for you know he is postmaster-general of France——”

“ Who ?—the queen or Brusquet ?” interrupted one.

“ The queen, of course,” explained another.

“ All—all the footmen,” continued he ; “ behind the chairs were postilions in disguise, and trumpeted them deaf with the horns they had concealed under their vests—and the pies were made of old leather—the cast-off harness and saddles of the posters, cut small and hacked, and disguised with spices, and sauces, and—“ *Sacré Dieu !* she said——”

“ Who—Brusquet or the queen ?” asked several, laughing.

“ By my fay !” said one, “ it is a good story and a good joke, be it who it may—ha ! ha ! Let us drink, to settle the matter.”

“ The queen, or Brusquet ?” continued the narrator, regarding his interrogators with a stolid look—it is not clear; but I have no doubt the mystery will be unravelled when—when——”

“ When you are sober,” observed a laughing neighbour.

“ Sober ! sober ! ne’er more sober in my life,” was the reply, accompanied with a courteous inclination of the head, and a grave, meaning smile, which raised shouts of laughter around. “ Try me—I entreat you to try. I can tell all my genealogy, from one end to another, without a fault.”

“ Pshaw !” exclaimed a young nobleman, putting forth a hand, every finger of which was laden with a jewel. “ What is the stone in my thumb-ring ? Tell me that, if you are sober.”

“ That’s a good one. But hold it nearer—let me see. The light is so indifferent ; and there is such a confounded noise.”

“ Ha ! ha ! an excellent reason, that last, for not seeing clear.”

“ It is—it is a turquoise. Yes—give it to me—there,” said the intemperate gentleman, holding the ring deliberately between his forefinger and thumb, and winking at it very sagely. Yes ; it is a turquoise—as blue as the skies, or as the eyes of the Madonna. I declare, gentlemen, it is blue, and a turquoise. No ! no ! it is not that either—no, on closer inspection, I see it clearly—oh ! it is palpable—the stone is red—glowing red ! It is a ruby, by St. Andrew ! the patron of the Order I shall never belong to—it is a rare and rich ruby—of as great price as the kiss of beauty. Most lovely ruby !—but, no—you need not laugh, gentlemen ; I retract in time—I do, honourably, like a knight and a noble. It is—let me see—yes—it is an emerald—green and brilliant, like the serpent’s eye—glittering and deep as the waves of the sea. A beautiful stone, by my fay ! and well worth, like the best pearl of Fernando Cortez, being kept for a fair bride, whenever I chance to get one.”

“ You had better keep your eye upon him, whispered Launcelot de Brederode (a natural son of Count Henry) to the owner of the ring, who was no other than Arkel, “ or he will certainly pocket the stone. I have known worse jokes pass at a banquet before now.”

“ Thank you for the warning,” returned Arkel, in the same undertone ; “ I will take care.”

The orator, delighted to perceive that he drew upon himself general attention, continued his rhapsody.

“ You wish me, messire, to return you this—this exquisite jewel—this pearl, as I was saying, beyond all price ; but you are mistaken, messire, strangely mistaken—you misname it in calling it a pearl—it is a

diamond, fit only for a king's crown—a dewdrop on a flower, as the rhymer has it. Gentlemen, who knows the song?"

"Give me back my dewdrop, or whatever you please to call it," said Arkel, somewhat impatiently; "it is a heirloom, and I was wrong to toy with it at all."

After some gentle insistence, the ring, which was of great value in many respects, was restored to its owner. It was a star-sapphire, of the purest water and large size; a gem not only highly esteemed in jewellery at that epoch, but to which superstition and romance attached the belief of supernatural properties.

"Why, Launcelot, how is this?" exclaimed Charles Mansfeldt, son of Count Ernest, who, at the earlier part of the banquet, had sat higher up the table, but who now joined his friend. "Whom have you got among you? Lamoral, as I live! I thought you told me positively that your father had advised him not to remain in Brussels, and that he had departed accordingly."

"And so he had," replied young Brederode; "at least so I believe; but here he is, as you see, as merry as any of us, and right merry are we all, I can assure you. I am ready, for a wager, to ride like the wind through the streets with Conrad Van der Noot, back to back on the same horse, and that, too, with our barrets turned inside out; we have done it before now."

"And may do so again, Launcelot, if you please," returned Mansfeldt, laughing good-naturedly, "but you must not expect me to be a party to your frolic."

"You are so horridly tame, Charles," said Launcelot, shrugging his shoulders disdainfully; "you will not, forsooth, enter frankly into a jest, and yet you enjoy one, after a sly fashion of your own, at a distance. You'll stick in purgatory, Charles—you'll never get beyond."

"If I avoid sinking lower," said Mansfeldt, "that will, at least, be something in my favour. But you and the brothers Van der Noot are wild *junckers*; your heads, I fear, are not very steady on your shoulders."

"As for that matter," replied Launcelot, "there are not many here at this moment can boast of so great an advantage."

"I hope you don't mean this as an omen," said Cornelius Van der Noot, the younger brother, whose wild countenance, inflamed with wine, harmonised strangely with the tones of a voice almost sepulchral.

"God grant it may not be one!" said Charles Mansfeldt, whose hilarity was damped by this passing observation. "That was a strange thought of yours, messire."

"Yes," said Cornelius Van der Noot, who grew more melancholy and desponding with every additional glass. "Who can tell how many here present shall die before a few, very few, short years are over! or what death we may die! When I gaze around me, I almost fancy this hall a funeral vault, and that I see skulls grinning at me from under these barrets for all their tinsel ornaments and gay feathers!"

"For our Lady's sake, don't let him proceed thus, Launcelot," said Mansfeldt; "he will sing us the service for the dead in a few minutes."

"That he will," said Launcelot; "what raises the hearts of others, makes him as heavy as lead. But he'll soon fall asleep, that's one comfort!"

"Ha! a well-timed interruption," exclaimed Conrad Van der Noot. "Here comes the Spaniard I told you of, Launcelot, who sings like a nightingale; he is full of life and spirit, and will make us as merry as birds, if he but chooses either to talk or sing. But he is capricious and variable."

"A Spaniard!" said Mansfeldt. "Is that prudent? Is it right?"

"Oh! perfectly safe, on my word," replied young Brederode. "I know him well—he is heart and soul our own; and between you and I, he has already proved himself useful and trustworthy to many of us."

"That is to say, he has lent money to the Van der Noots and to Launcelot over and over again," whispered another youngster in Mansfeldt's ear; "he has helped them out of many a scrape."

At that moment a form, whose plain burgher's garb contrasted strangely with the gay costumes around him, surpassing in manly grace every being, however distinguished, in that crowded hall crossed, with a swift step, the short distance that intervened between the door and the table at which the youths were sitting. There might be in the quickness of his movement, and the haste with which the young men made way for him, a desire to reunite, as speedily as possible, in social enjoyment; but to Charles Mansfeldt's observing eye it had more the appearance of an anxiety to escape the notice of those who occupied the upper end of the room. He turned towards Arkel, who being precisely in the same situation as himself in every respect, was the person there with whom he felt he could most sympathise. They had been more moderate in their libations than the others, and had evidently preserved their faculties more unscathed. Arkel returned his gaze, and then fixed his eyes with amazement on the new comer. His surprise soon gave way to a mixed expression of curiosity and anxiety. The latter feeling communicated itself instantaneously to Mansfeldt; and he determined to watch narrowly the person thus introduced, doubtless for the first time, to such a circle. The stranger seemed, however, perfectly at his ease, until he became conscious of Arkel's gaze; then indeed a slight flush betrayed some symptom of recognition on his part, and an embarrassment came over him which did not escape Mansfeldt's observation; it was, however, but passing; he recovered himself almost instantly.

"Is it long since you left Antwerp?" asked Launcelot, nodding, in a most friendly manner.

"Only a few hours," replied the stranger. "I came in all haste upon your invitation."

"Well, well," said Launcelot, laughing away some slight confusion; for he remembered the invitation had been accompanied with, or rather was the herald of, certain demands of a very different nature, which he did not wish to hear alluded to at that moment. "You are come, and welcome. You are an enemy to the Inquisition, and, therefore, the friend of every one here present, although known to few; so here's a pledge to a better acquaintance with my worthy friend, Lopez Chievosa by name, by birth a Spaniard, Moor, Saracen, Turk—it matters not what."

"But it does matter," said the young Spaniard, haughtily; "to me, at least, if to none else."

But his health was drunk with such loud demonstrations of kindness by the offender himself and the brothers Van der Noot, that what he might have said was drowned in the increasing confusion. It was even

with the greatest difficulty that he freed himself of the somewhat inconvenient professions of the brothers, who, taking by main force each one of his long, thin, dark hands, swore that their friendship for him would last until the clouds should fall, and the world dissolve ;—a declaration which brought tears of sensibility into the eyes of an old campaigner who sat not far off. The disorder and clamour among the young men, augmenting with every second, at length attracted the attention of the graver portion of the company forcibly towards that quarter.

“ Messire de Barlaymont may look and talk as disdainfully as he pleases,” said Count Henry de Brederode, looking with a smile of satisfaction on the scene of unbounded revelry which the crowded hall displayed. “ If we are but *des Gueux*,* as he pleased to call us but this morning, we are merry ones at least. Had each here present his own, many of us would be richer than he.”

“ But how was that?” exclaimed several voices at a time. “ When—where did Barlaymont apply so vile an epithet to us?”

“ I and ‘many others overheard it,’ said Brederode. “ Yesterday, as I was handing the petition to the princess.”

“ How came Barlaymont to be there?” demanded Berghe, who had not arrived in time to join the confederates at the presentation. “ Tell me, I pray.”

“ The council was but just over when we were admitted into the presence, as I have already told you. Many of the councillors had remained by the regent, among whom, of course, the President Viglius and Count of Barlaymont were first. When the princess saw us enter with a self-possessed air, she became very pale, and turned to Barlaymont, as if for support. Upon which, we, who were nearest, distinctly overheard these words: ‘ Fear not, madam, they are but a pack of Gueux.’ This he spoke in French.”

“ The insolent wretch!” exclaimed several voices, with angry vehemence.

“ Never fear, gentlemen,” said Louis of Nassau, “ we will force the word down the villain’s throat before the day is closed.”

“ I, on the contrary,” said Brederode, “ feel very much gratified by the epithet. Barlaymont has often taxed me with not belonging to the Order. Faith, I have not much inclination towards an assembly so few members of which have any bowels left for the mother that bore them—the land that gave them birth. If you think like me, my friends, we will form a new Order among ourselves—a new brotherhood; rendered necessary by the state of our country and our own position. We have gone too far to recede, our best chance of safety lies in going forward. He who retracts is lost; union makes the weakest strong. Yes! let us form a new Order. Heretofore, such have been inaugurated by princes; an afflicted people may, in their turn, create one for the holy purpose of maintaining their threatened liberties, their failing prosperity. Let the word pronounced in scorn by a proud upstart be our watchword! Let us redeem it from its base acceptation, and show that a patriotic self-devotion may ennoble all things, even the most lowly. Let us make the word ring from shore to shore, that the inland rivers may bear the tale to the sea, of the truth and constancy of the confederates. One day, perhaps, the cheek of Barlaymont may grow pale, as the word of scor

* Beggars.

will sound like a coming tempest in his ear! We have long, in vain, sought a suitable name for our association; here it comes ready-coined to our hand. Gentlemen, have with me—*Vive les Gueux!*”

The speech of Brederode, who had risen to deliver it, had attracted and, towards its close, riveted the attention of all. Although generally but a very indifferent speaker, his enunciation being naturally slow, hesitating, and often embarrassed and stammering, the wine, that had over-excited many, had only warmed him sufficiently to overcome all such impediments; and he delivered these words with an enthusiasm that won over many, even whilst it failed to convince. Those who surrounded Brederode repeated the toast with wild delight. The singularity of the name thus proposed for adoption agreed with the humour of the moment; it was received with general and rapturous consent, and none drank it with more fiery zeal than the youthful set of which Arkel and Charles Mansfeldt formed a part. When the prolonged and deafening shouts that accompanied this ebullition of feeling had somewhat subsided, Brederode again rose; silence reigned throughout, and the attention of all was fixed upon his movements. He produced a beggar’s scrip (how he came by it never was explained), from whence he took a small wooden cup, such as beggars were in the habit of using. This he filled to the brim with the choicest wine, and holding it on high, he said:

“I care not if I become a beggar in the service of the king and this country; and here, over this cup, do I swear solemnly that I will stand by the confederates to the last, and that I will go unto death for the sake of each individually, as well as for all. Yes! I’ll die rather than abandon a friend! *Vive les Gueux!*”

Enthusiastic cheers, that threw the former ones into shade, proclaimed the delight with which this additional toast was received. Cuyleemberg, Louis of Nassau, the Counts of Berghe, St. Aldegonde, and De Montigny, John Sauvage, Seigneur d’Escaulhèque, and others, each in turn, claimed the wooden cup—for Brederode had but touched it with his lips—and eagerly took the same oath, in clear, loud tones. By this time all stood up, and the cup passed from hand to hand, from lip to lip; whilst a hundred vows consecrated its brim. Eustache Fienne Esquedra, and John Marnix of Thoulouse, took the oath, in as calm and cheerful a voice as if the death they invoked were never to surprise them.

Many were outrageous in their zeal.

“Die!” exclaimed a portly gentleman, whose habits of intemperance had stamped his person with the visible marks of premature old age, “ay! a thousand million deaths for any of you, that I would. I’d be drawn by wild horses, quartered, hung, drowned, flayed alive, without wincing. I’ll stake my soul on my courage; it is boiling in my veins, like molten lead! Hand me the cup. Here goes, the oath!”

“I lo-love every one of you like my born brother—father—mother—like my born wife!” exclaimed another. “Die for you!—to be sure I would—and will, that’s more, if I have but the occasion!”

“King Philip will not, I suppose, deprive us of the opportunity long, if this reaches his ears,” said Arkel, laughing, as the cup rapidly advanced towards the set among whom he was sitting.

The elder Van der Noot acquitted himself of his task with cheerful readiness, but Cornelius took the cup with a most gloomy and profoundly sagacious look, and holding it up, exclaimed, in a deep, hollow voice,

that formed a strange dissonance with the peals of laughter around him, “Die! to be sure we’ll die—we may take our oaths of that. So, here goes! Death to all here present as speedily as possible, by land and by water!”

“Hush, hush!” said Chievosa, putting his hand before his mouth, and, taking the cup from him, he passed it rapidly to Lancelot de Brederode; for some gentlemen, on hearing these strange words, and unconscious probably of the source from whence they sprang, had already their hands on the hilts of their daggers. By this manœuvre he also avoided joining in the ceremony, which both Arkel and Charles de Mansfeldt observed. Lancelot, perceiving that the chance words of the more than half-besotted Van der Noot had somewhat checked the ardour of those on that side of the table, took the drained bowl, and replenished it, with the loudest and most extravagant demonstrations of enthusiasm, which again roused the spirits of the party within ear-shot.

When in his turn Arkel took the bowl, he hesitated slightly. He was quite alive to the serious import and binding nature of the oath, that might ultimately devote to a premature grave many of those who took it so lightly. He had hitherto treated the conspiracy as the toy of his dawning manhood; but this one rash act might turn it into his destiny. He had not prepared himself to view in so serious a light a matter in which he felt his heart was not very deeply engaged; nor did he feel justified, at one moment’s warning, in taking a step so irrecoverable—a step upon which was cast honour, fame, and all that a man holds dear. It were much for one so young to refuse the pledge which so many older than himself had taken freely; but, although the generosity of his nature revolted against this self-seeking prudence, his hand was about to repulse the proffered cup, when Chievosa for the first time took direct notice of him.

“You have admirers and enthusiastic friends in Antwerp, my lord,” said he, “who will scarcely believe me when I report it, how lukewarm are your feelings in a just cause. They fancy you daring and bold to a fault; but prudence is a fine virtue, especially in the young.”

The sarcasm was spoken in a half-supercilious, half-mocking tone, that set Arkel’s blood on fire. He would, probably from anger at the audacity of the young burgher, have decidedly refused the pledge, for he scorned to remind Chievosa that he too had avoided it; but Lancelot and others took up the ball. A few words from Charles Mansfeldt, which seemed to imply that although his father’s displeasure was to the full as certain as Arkel’s, he had not hesitated, appeared to determine his line of conduct; carried away by the embarrassment of the moment, and not sufficiently firm to maintain his will against the jibes of his neighbours, he gave way, and quaffed and vowed, as had the others, with the difference, that many more eyes were upon him than if he complied at once and without hesitation; he felt conscious, too, although he avoided looking directly at him, that a smile of scorn curled the lip of the Spaniard. Many of those who now performed the ceremony were incapable of understanding its meaning, and bitterly did Arkel regret that he had allowed the opportunity to escape, of giving a salutary example.

“Florent,” said one of the younkers to him, whose delusion had taken so maritime a turn, “Florent! why don’t you drink, and swear yourself a Gueux?”

"How can I," stuttered the woe-begone youth, attempting in vain to steady the hand that had grasped the cup; "how can I? Don't you hear how the wind whistles? how the ship racks? I can't stand—my head—my stomach—all suffer alike at sea—I never can bear it even in calm weather—this is a fearful storm. Ah!" he almost shrieked, as his trembling hand spilled the contents of the wooden goblet over his sadly disarranged finery, "the waves are coming over—we are drowned—all drowned—will no one save me?" he tottered and reeled as he spoke.

Lancelot refilled the goblet and forced it to his lips; but Arkel rose, and advancing with the dignity of one influenced by a just thought, he roughly pushed away the cup that Lancelot held, saying in loud, severe tones—

"I wonder, gentlemen, that you are not ashamed to urge a man perhaps to his ruin in this helpless state. He cannot even understand what is passing around him—I trust you are not in earnest in pressing this matter, for it is neither fair nor honourable."

"What do you mean by this reproach?" said Lancelot, fiercely, for his wrath was at all times easily roused. "*He shall* drink and swear, if I please."

"*He shall not!* I will not suffer it!" exclaimed Arkel, in as angry and haughty a tone, his lip actually quivering with the passion he endeavoured to suppress.

"He shall by —," returned Lancelot, uttering an oath that was then much in vogue, though more familiar to roistering soldiers than to persons of gentle blood.

"By all my hopes of knighthood!" said Arkel, snatching the goblet from Lancelot's hands. He had not time to utter more, for Charles Mansfeldt sprang from his seat, and held back the infuriated young Brederode as he would have aimed a blow at his opponent.

"For God's sake, Lancelot," he whispered, "be quiet. What would your father say if he knew what folly and child's-play is going on here? And you, Lamoral, take care of Florent as quickly as you can: he is not fit to remain here."

Mansfeldt had touched the right chord. Arkel had not noticed the raised arm of young Brederode; and, as he turned to his *protégé*, all trace of anger vanished from his brow.

"Come, Florent," said he, "you are saved for once; come away with me."

"Whither?" inquired the unfortunate youth, leaning heavily on the arm of his protector as he led him slowly away. "Well, I owe you life, that's sure."

"You may have spoken a truer word, Florent, than you imagine," replied Arkel, who, without heeding the words of Lancelot de Brederode, "You'll pay me for this, Lamoral," reached the door and effected the safe exit of his companion.

By this time the wooden cup had returned to Count Henry de Brederode. He took it up with a great show of respect and veneration, and hung it up, as well as the scrip which had contained it, on the wall above the place where he sat. Immediately nails and hammers were called for, and the guests simultaneously rose. Those who could get at the means of so doing fixed a nail in the wall, in accordance with the action of

Brederode, in lieu of the scrip and cup with which, very beggars as many of them were in reality, they had not yet provided themselves.

The spirits of the company were running riot; reason was banished, and gaiety had far overstepped its boundaries, when the entrance of three new comers—chance visitors, it would seem—added another feature to the scene. An hour sooner their names would have excited respect, and imposed restraint on the major part of the company, but now the Prince of Orange and the Counts of Egmont and De Horn were received with shouts of rapture and deafening clamours. They had been dining with the Count Ernest of Mansfeldt, and on their way towards their homes entered the Palace of Cuylemberg, to ascertain if Louis of Nassau and Brederode were yet there. As the Prince of Orange gave this explanation of their appearance at that hour, a meaning glance passed between himself and his brother; but it was noticed by none. The confusion augmented with every instant, and Brederode now explained to the new comers what had passed, and begged them to pledge the *Gueux*.

The courtesy of that period hardly admitted of a refusal. All three drank “*Vive les Gueux!*” with every wish for their success. This condescension, which was considered, as well it might be, a signal mark of approbation, was received with the wildest expressions of joy. Glasses were shivered to atoms in every direction—jewelled barrets flew in the air, and fell in different parts of the room—some swore eternal friendship who had never met before—even the disputatious became amicable. There was a wringing of hands and felicitations to be seen and heard on all sides, as if a public benefit had suddenly fallen to their lot, and above all arose the incessant and wild chorus—“*Vive les Gueux.*”

Of course, among the three hundred, all were not exalted beyond, or rather reduced below the boundaries of reason, but enthusiasm or feint filled up the chasms that wine had left, and even the grave Philip Marnix grew eloquent with the eagerness of his feelings. Cornelius van der Noot had betaken himself to profound slumber, gently reposing on the shoulders of a patient neighbour, and Charles Mansfeldt alone looked grave; but when the protracted banquet was ended, all that left the palace of Cuylemberg were irrevocably pledged—and retreat being closed by the imprudence of some, the thoughtlessness of others, they had nothing left but to advance, as bravely as they might, along the path they had chosen. The setting sun that gilded their flushed cheeks as they struggled forth into the streets, dissipating, in some measure, the exaltation of their spirits, struck upon them, for the most part, the bitter consciousness that they were engaged, perhaps doomed men.

On the morrow of that day almost the whole of the young nobility of Brussels, and gentlemen belonging to the noblest houses, exhibited on their habiliments tokens of “*Gueusanship*”—the wooden bowl hanging at their girdles, and the palmer’s scallop-shell decorating their caps. By far the greater number, indeed, paraded the streets in the grey serge cloak of the mendicant, with all the pride that ermine could have conferred. The approving shouts of the delighted people as they beheld their champions thus, as it were, hoisting their colours, penetrated to the regent’s ear; and bands of beggar-clad noblemen met her astonished eye as, eager to ascertain the cause, she drew near the palace window. These were ominous sights and sounds, and well calculated to fill her bosom with alarm.

From the nobility the freak soon extended to the merchants and people, and spread from town to town, until it became so general that all, everywhere, adopted this manner of expressing their disapprobation of the Inquisition, and sympathy with those who volunteered to beggar themselves in the cause of their threatened liberties. High and low, rich and poor, alike prized the badge and the pledge of an association whose ultimate aim was the wish of every heart, and with a palpable form the party gained at once an established and strong hold on the affections of the masses.

So far Brederode's device, whether the offspring of deep calculation or the chance hit of the moment, was crowned with success; and when the day arrived which he had fixed upon for his departure from Brussels to visit other towns, there were but few in the Netherlands whose inhabitants were not, more or less openly, *Gueux*.

ST. VERONICA; OR, THE ORDEAL OF FIRE.

A BIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER V.

A GLEAM of light which penetrated my dungeon greeted my return from slumber, and by its brilliancy announced the dawn. Thus no longer my sight, but my reason, was to acquaint me with the presence of night and day.

"I now know how severe are the pains of imprisonment!" exclaimed I. "The judge who pronounces—the prince who executes—judgment, ought first to undergo, that he may know personally the sufferings to which he sends another. A day to the condemned is longer than a year to the free! O that mercy had been discovered before the power of monarchs became of age; then it would have been taught to the heirs of mock-omnipotence in their youth, and almost have enjoyed the earnestness of religion. And is it then true," continued I, "that the most wretched are afflicted with the brightest dreams, and that glorious visions are bounded on either side by woe?"

The gaoler withdrew the bars and entered with provisions. I regarded him not, nor addressed him, but, when he had retired, I seemed to take a new lease of my dungeon. I thought of arranging my plans and ideas, but all that was written within me seemed hieroglyphical, impossible to be deciphered. I was alarmed to find past history closed; the present, as it were, dying; the future masked, like a monk behind the cowl. I was able to go over my dream but once, and memory was exhausted. I then dwelt on the entrance of the gaoler, and heard the locks and bars for hours, and when I ate my bread and drank my water I shed tears, which were among the few that had relieved me for years. Thus days passed away in inactivity, and nights in dream. Every morning appeared to be the anniversary of some dread affliction, the week was ever at an end, and

Sunday seemed the name of every morrow. My uneasiness increased from hour to hour, and was aggravated by the uncertainty in which the period of my confinement was involved. Willingly would I have commuted my doubts on this subject for the certainty of even twenty years. One morning, as I was dwelling on this thought, my old acquaintance, the well-armed sbirro, entered my dungeon, and, as the lock was turned on the door after him, I conjectured that he had something to communicate. I looked earnestly into his face—I looked closer; he smiled, and in a transport I exclaimed, “It is Labestia—it is Scoronconcolo himself!”

He had entered the police for a time, as he told me, for his own private purposes, but in his new capacity saw no opportunity of assisting me in my escape. He informed me that sacrilege, besides other crimes, was laid to my charge; and that it would be four months, at least, before I should be brought to trial. On hearing this intelligence, I indulged in despair; the certainty now seemed worse than the previous ignorance of my real situation.

“Scoronconcolo,” I cried, “I must make my escape this day.”

The bravo smiled at my enthusiasm, and told me that my gaoler was guarded by a sentinel outside, whose post was not left night or day; that before reaching the drawbridge I should have to encounter a dozen guards; that the governor’s windows overlooked the bridge; and, lastly, that a garrison was stationed in the court outside the citadel.

I mused for several minutes on the possibility of overcoming these extraordinary difficulties, and, being fertile in expedients, a scheme at length flashed upon my imagination. My first inquiry was, whether the gaoler was corruptible. To this Scoronconcolo replied affirmatively, but declared that he saw no advantage derivable from tampering with a man possessed of such limited power.

“When he returns, present him with a sum of money, and desire him by some means to break the windows which overlook the drawbridge, and, under pretence that they cannot be repaired until the following day, let him paste paper over them, so as entirely to shut out the view.”

“That part of the scheme may, perhaps, be accomplished,” said Scoronconcolo, “but what then?”

“In the next place propose to him that, when he brings me food, he shall unbar my door as usual, then dash the water-jug on the ground, raise an outcry, and throw himself down, as in a fit, at the further end of the passage. The sentinel will hasten to his assistance, will he not? and, while he is struggling to hold him, I will creep from the dungeon, and ascend the steps.”

“If the latter part of the scheme be as good as the first,” said Scoronconcolo, “success is possible; but how are you to pass the guards?”

“When you have settled all preliminaries with the gaoler,” I continued, “go to Volterra, and purchase for me a book sold secretly there, at the shop of one Nobili, and filled with immoral pictures. Take this yourself to the window of the corridor, draw the guards into conversation, and entertain them with the drawings, with your back turned towards the door. They will look over your shoulders with a curiosity not easily satiated, so obscene is the book I name.”

Scoronconcolo laughed, and undertook to execute my commands.

“There is another service, not less necessary to the success of my plan,

which you will perform for me at the same time," said I; "procure me the garment of a monk, that, while passing through the garrison, I may confer a blessing on any stragglers who may observe me. Provide, also, a carriage in readiness outside the gates."

"Prince," exclaimed Scoronconcolo, "you are the only man whose sagacity I have yet found equal to my own; all shall be accomplished to-morrow; we cannot meet again until then."

Once more left alone, I thought over my plan, and, upon frequent rehearsal, it appeared simpler and more simple, till at last I knew my part so well, that success seemed certain. At an early hour next morning, Scoronconcolo was again in my presence. Under his cloak he brought the garb, and I was soon dressed in my monastic habit, Scoronconcolo having informed me that everything had succeeded under his directions up to the present time. He told me that he had given the guards a glimpse of the volume, and promised, to their great delight, to return with it in a short time. He added, that his return to the passage would be a signal for the gaoler to commence his part, and that on reaching the gates of the court I should find a carriage ready to convey me away.

I thanked the robber, and promised him a large reward.

The gaoler, faithful to his instructions, had already practised a fit in the governor's room, and smashed the window in the struggle; but shortly recovering from his paroxysm, and appearing as well as before, he was deemed capable of executing his duty for the present.

Scoronconcolo left me; for the first time I doubted the accomplishment of my project. The lock soon turned; the jug was broken; the gaoler fell; the sentinel, alarmed, rushed towards him. I opened the door cautiously; it creaked on its hinges; I was lost! I saw the back of the sentinel—the gaoler had him fast. I advanced on my way; a female passed me as I reached the corridor. I held up my finger to command silence, stretched my arms over her in blessing; she sank on her knees. I traversed the corridor: shouts of laughter smote my ears, the soldiers, one and all, were pressing eagerly forward and looking over each other's backs towards the shoulders of Scoronconcolo, at the immoral pictures which he turned over. I crossed the bridge, and though it rained in torrents I advanced majestically. By the time I had reached the centre of the court, I saw that I was observed by two or three soldiers who were engaged in polishing their arms. I thought it prudent to advance towards them; they met me, and bending reverently before me, received my curse in the parody of a Latin prayer.

CHAPTER VI.

"WHAT news, my Mezzofonte?"

"None but good since your highness's return."

"Have you learnt the cause of my arrest?"

"The traitor Thanatos denounced you to the government as guilty of sacrilege, committed when at Siena."

"He shall not escape punishment."

"Retain him no longer in your service; while you have been away he has committed the baseness of stealing verses from your manuscripts, and bears your honours."

"Have any persons been here?"

"Many; among them the Duchess of Savatelli, seeking her sister the Lady Giuditta, who had again left the convent of Santa Maria Novella."

"Who has seen her?"

"She has been stricken with the plague. Not long before your departure she fell down in the street; the bell of the Misericordia proclaimed the event."

"What else do you know?—tell me all."

"The news having been brought to the palace when you were sick, Thanatos attended in your stead, for it was your turn. He watched her through her illness, at a time when all her friends were absent, and no nurse would brave the pestilence by administering to the sick."

"Is she restored?"

"Restored, but a homeless wanderer; and her reason said to be impaired."

"Giuditta, then, wanders the wide world! And I am he who set before her delusions which, like the Fata Morgana, have misled her into the wilderness, to fall exhausted at last under the plague. So fatally have I beguiled her simplicity, and led her through scenes of suffering! What a life has mine been, that a being like her should be lost in its pestilential maze. But whither has she departed?"

Then followed a conversation respecting one equally dear.

"Where," I asked, "is the novice who was present at the funeral?"

"She was here, with the Duchess of Savatelli, and is gone to visit her relations in Lombardy."

"To-morrow I will follow; be in readiness at an early hour, and let Ippolito be made acquainted with my determination, that he also may be ready. And stay—should any agent of the government in the mean time appear at my gates, let him not escape thence: I will return to the fortress no more."

From that hour a burning desire impelled me, worn down and shattered as I was, to follow Adora. The only result of anxious inquiries was the information that she had gone to a country-house near Milan, on a visit to a relation, before finally taking the vow. My own country was no longer to me what it had once been, nor could it resume its wonted aspect, except from the beloved presence of her whose image had so often possessed my senses during sleep, and at length been presented to my bodily vision.

In the brief space preceding my departure, seeing that I stood accused by Thanatos, before the sacred heads of the church, of sacrilege, I dreaded lest a sentence of excommunication should complete my isolation, at the thought of which, horror thrilled through my veins. I summoned Thanatos before me, and dismissed him my service, but not in anger: pride led me to treat him with indifference. Notwithstanding his robbery of my works, which must have been fresh in his thoughts, he disregarded the icy barrier that I opposed to him, and taunted me with the immorality of my writings. He said that I was suspected of committing crimes for no other purpose than to describe vividly the sufferings of human beings. This he opened to me with ill-dissembled satisfaction, adding, that critics were so thoroughly possessed with this notion, that they hesitated to decide upon the questioned reality of my merits.

How difficult, indeed, is it to be a sound critic. Consider the word prosperity: it is prose to the rich, poetry to the poor.

When lying in prison I was like to a Prometheus, the vulture preying at the heart; yet then glory seemed to go on ever increasing—the stars still shone—Phidias was beheld in their light, and Petrarch continued immortal. Now that I enjoyed freedom, should I not, as then, drift on with the foremost?

Before parting with my secretary I invited him to an entertainment in the evening, and made the arrangements necessary to accomplish the purpose which I had in view.

I was in the ante-room at the appointed hour, and there awaited his appearance. He was punctual, and wore on his countenance an unusual expression of good-humour, though his lip preserved its sarcastic expression. Influenced, perhaps, by some motive conjectured with his dismissal, he had given more than ordinary attention to his toilet.

I conducted him into the saloon, and in a moment, we were in the midst of a blaze of beauty. There were none but women present; all were splendidly attired. When he entered, some were at the harp, while others sang in sweet accord the praises of the poet Thanatos. Such was his vanity, that, instead of appreciating the sarcasm, he stood in ravishment at the sounds of high-wrought flattery, and gave credence to his sudden elevation to honour.

Soon there was discernible an expression of heartfelt grief in every countenance; and where the words of the music related to the impending departure of my guest, all eyes were turned towards him in tears; and he, believing no doubt that I wished to retain his services, was overcome by the effect, and restrained his emotion with difficulty.

"Have you invited me to this banquet that I may be converted, and know that feeling lives in woman?" he asked.

I looked at him abstractedly, and made no reply. All, meanwhile, regarded him with a sentiment which gave new power to the hand and voice, and was responded to by the deepening melody.

When the sounds ceased, the ladies approached us. I advanced to introduce my companion, whom they received with distinction, though less warmly than they had lauded his merits. He had never before been thrown thus familiarly into the midst of a distinguished circle, nor was he aware that the Florentine women would suffer themselves to be thus entertained, even by a prince; or that they possessed in private life so great condescension, united with such fascinating powers. He was well received by all whom he addressed, and though he feigned indifference whenever his looks met mine, I saw that his cheeks were flushed, his eyes on fire, and his heart in the flames of amorous delight.

Refreshments succeeded the music; and wine, the most choice and delicate, opened the hearts of all present. Thanatos talked more freely than ever, and casting off all reserve expressed the tenderest ideas. The music was renewed, and he listened with rapture at the side of one Leonora, who was surpassingly beautiful. He named to her his favourite airs, and she repeated them in solo, addressing her voice and looks to him alone. She was tall in stature, her eyes were full and downcast, her cheeks suffused with a continual blush, her voice was firm and musical, and when she smiled, her bashfulness seemed to vanish, only to return with her naturally serious and modest expression. There are women whose forms are so noble and voluptuous, that consciousness seems ashamed to inhabit so much beauty, except at the moment when they

speak; then their smile diverts their attention from their charms, and modesty brightens into animation. Such was the case with the fine creature who now absorbed the entire attention of the cynic. She flattered, she intoxicated him with her conversation; and well she might, for she was possessed of beauty which, even when her eyes were downcast, spoke love irresistibly. I had never seen a man more completely subdued to the influence of feminine graces. He came up to me, and squeezed my hand as if I had been his lover, and for the first time in my life I saw the wretch contented.

While Thanatos was thus occupied with his chosen fair one, I divided my attentions among the rest, and amused myself by turns with all. Sweets and viands were served in an adjoining room; wines flowed, eyes sparkled, and the apartments resounded with a general expression of delight.

“What means this charming display of talent and beauty,” inquired the cynic. “I candidly confess that you have triumphed; I can neglect the fair no longer.”

“Wait another hour,” I replied, “and you shall learn its meaning; meantime, continue to enjoy yourself.”

He willingly obeyed, and renewed the proofs of his love towards the fair Leonora, who absorbed all his thoughts. The hour was on the confines of dawn, when music was once more renewed, and the company arranged themselves in pleasing groups, and moved to the sounds in dance. When the party at length prepared to disperse, each separately took their farewell of me, and of the secretary.

“Now, Thanatos,” said I, “let me hear by what art you have secured to yourself the admiration which this night has been lavished on you?”

“What I have done,” answered the cynic, “to deserve of them such favour I know not.”

“Have you not won their respect and love?” continued I.

“It appears so, truly,” was the answer.

“Every man,” I resumed, “who attracts the notice of women, must have merit. Your conquest of Leonora’s heart shows that, to command success, you required only to be known. You threw off your assumed indifference, and she saw your deserts; still it remains for time to prove whether her fidelity will reward them.”

“She has sworn eternal constancy!” exclaimed the cynic.

“And may her faith be thus lasting!” said I; “but perhaps you have to learn a lesson. I knew, what you only pretended to do, how hollow is the heart of woman. Still, like all others, except yourself, I wished to enjoy the semblance of their regard, not caring for its source so long as I possessed its visible sign. Compelled to part with you, and wishing, before you should leave me, that your literary merits, if not your other accomplishments and occupations, should be acknowledged in an appropriate manner, I hired these lovely creatures to come and enact love and admiration of you; and methinks they have performed this as well as such a part is every day acted in the world.”

The cynic was struck dumb; in a hollow satiric laugh he attempted to disguise his mortification. It failed of the desired effect on me; indeed, it was the bitterest laugh that ever shook the sides of a cynic!

When he was gone, I laughed; and an hour afterwards I found myself in the same place, laughing still.

CHAPTER VII.

“ THOU sun, on whose throne sits the majesty of day! whose empire the peace of worlds, the prosperity of nature, and thy watchful look proclaim, I have never cursed thy light! Thou key-stone of the firmament! I who have ever gazed on thee in awe, and am looking now on thy plenteous orb—I, who have erred the most of all men—now bless thee! When my heart has been cold, thou hast infused into it benevolence; when I have been astray, not knowing whither I wandered, thou hast assured me that I was safe.

“ The toiling wretch alone complaineth of thy salutary beams! The tyrant swelleth with pride as he watcheth thy lofty course; the beardless, the grey-headed, experience wonder that possessing the earth which they dwell on, they should also enjoy thee and thy lustrous train afar.

“ Great men have loved to perish in thy presence; thy rays have cheered their fading vision, and revived the history of nature in their departing spirits.

“ The philosopher hath adored equally thy rising and thy setting glory; he hath descried thy lustre in the moon, thy colours in the leaves, thy pencillings in the flowers, thy attributes in the rainbow; he hath acknowledged thy equals in the fixed stars alone.

“ O thou, to whom my country is especially grateful, let me, ere I die, be as thou art, tranquil amidst glory; then shall I learn to regard my life as a necessary portion of the past.”

Such were my silent thoughts as we ascended the Apennines on our way from Florence. As we left the base of the first ascent below us, we viewed with a delight which, like the recurring dawn, is ever fresh to the Florentine, the extensive city of palaces and villas below; for the suburban habitations which grace the vale of Arno and the encircling hills, as thickly as the stars gem the heavens, appear afar to be a portion of that city whose centre is Florence, whose glory is the Palazzo Vecchio, the Duomo, the Campanile!

“ Beautiful Italy!” exclaimed Ippolito; “ in what soft sublimity these Apennines float on thy bosom! The sun throws his many-coloured beams over the velvet hollows, the shadows of the journeying cloud come like breaths of air to waft the mountains away.”

“ Did you observe,” continued Ippolito, “ that as we passed the cemetery on our left, with its cross in the centre, a labourer mowed the grass between the flat gravestones? How well does that scythe-armed peasant represent the person of Time! The bladed grass drops on the ashes of the dead which nourished it, and is gathered into stacks for use, a season bringing life to the dead, another requiring it back. In this manner revolution ever varies the empire of matter, while scythe-armed Time, the viceroy of Eternity, looks on.”

“ Who has taught you thus to meditate,” I inquired, not a little surprised at the tone of feeling he manifested.

“ The great master,” answered Ippolito; “ he has taught me things whose virtue compels that love of nature which it is man’s highest destiny to know. Truth is dear to him; with equal devotion he searches after the rights of matter and of mind, and from simple examples arrives at sublimest ideas. Not an atom, he says, can be ever lost, nor one of its

far-extending relations be impeded. Though the volcano hurry it from the centre to the surface, though the storm bear it from the Alps up to the Andes, though the concussion of worlds banish it to other planets, though the sun should absorb it into its vibrating orb, its safety is ensured. Though its erratic course endure through ages inconceivable, at the fixed time it returns like the comet to its place. Who can calculate its time? A mission the Creator stamps on its tiny globe, and its return is marked by the same order of things as existed when any one of its careers began."

We passed but few travellers on the way. Here and there a cart creaked along, with the muddy carter lying in it at full length like a huge worm, while the horse, pursuing its own way, looked about for amusement. Or suddenly a crew of mendicant children would rush out upon us open-handed, resembling forms of clay, which, vivified by the sun, had scrambled out of their native ditch to beg.

It was spring, but as evening approached sounds resembling the voice of autumn were borne in the breeze, and we passed between hills which arose in defiance of the sky, their abrupt summits and naked crags asserting the sway of an evil power, as eloquently as the plains argued the government of a good.

At Covigliaio ended our first day's journey. The following day, starting early for Bologna, we set forward on foot, the carriage following. Ippolito entered again on the subject of Etruscan philosophy, and led the conversation until we reached the cottage of a mountaineer, situated on a humble bank by the roadside. The proprietor, an aged man, was working in his garden; we stopped and spoke to him. His ancestors, he informed us, had occupied this cottage for ages, and the land bore his family name. If pride, thought I, be not blameable in the great, let it not be condemned in a rustic patrician!

We went on, advancing through scenery of a wilder aspect, and whose antiquity appeared to us to be ancestral to creation itself, and as such arrested our thoughts; while extended beneath us we saw the Lombard plains, and afar off the Adriatic and Tyrrhene seas. But those thoughts were but the false poetry of the mind, for the soil which we had deemed the rude parent, was, in truth, the grave of nature; for it proved to be composed of shells and sands, which had been deposited in tombs of the now distant ocean. From Lojano, where we saw these things, we descended to Pianoro, and thence through a rich country to Bologna: but in the midst of plenty forgot not the barren mountains, and thanked Heaven that the human race was permitted to live safely among the wrecks of a once glad creation.

On reaching this famed city, we proceeded to the palace of the counts of Pepoli, whose last descendant was a beloved and respected friend, with whom, during my early travels, I had passed many profitable hours. I loved him for his humanity, and reverenced him for his genius, which had added new graces to the arts and letters of his father-land. He was one of those who, to release his country from thraldom, was willing to sacrifice the noble possessions which his ancestors had won in repelling the inroads of tyranny. Bologna was his place of habitation, but the world his home. His palace contained the choicest works of Caravaggio, Raffaelle, Buonarotti, Titian, Giulio Romano,

Bellini, Ghirlandajo, Giotto, Cimabue ; but he cared for these treasures only as they incited his mind to glory, and his heart to good. His qualities were so great, they endangered his own welfare with the desire to share it with mankind.

On a visit with the family of this nobleman, to my great surprise, I found *Æthra Piccolomini*, now the consort of the Count di Marsino, a lord of Milan, distinguished in the profession of arms, but whom I had regarded with antipathy in former years at Siena. *Æthra* had been staying at Bologna for her health, and was about to return home. It being known that I was on my way to the north, it was proposed that I should unite my suite with hers, that she might have the benefit of my protection.

The expression of the Countess di Marsino's countenance was not much changed ; it indicated little desire of admiration, and her mind appeared wholly absorbed in rational pursuits. Although addressed in the most flattering manner, her replies were sensible ; if she betrayed pleasure, it was rather elicited by the subject of conversation than the language of praise. She was lively, and possessed a wit so delicate that her railleries were devoid of offence. But, in spite of her modest deportment, there was a certain restlessness in her charms, which not only attracted, but rivetted the attention of men. With every feature lovely as ever, there was a new manner which kept all these charms in constant play, and made her quiet and retiring figure conspicuous amidst her sex. Now, with a sudden, but graceful movement of the head, she would regard some inanimate object which attracted no other person's attention ; now she would smile at her own thoughts ; now, after a pretty laugh, she would give utterance to some remark without appearing to expect a reply ; and all these graces succeeded one another so rapidly in her, and with so little apparent consciousness of their effect, that it was scarcely possible to notice any one else, or to avoid sympathising in whatever related to her.

I remained a few days at Bologna, and found that this lady made a considerable sensation in society. Love was made to her without mercy ; but the married beauty did not seem to perceive it. I remarked that she only looked up when she herself commenced a subject ; that, when spoken to, she bent her eyes to the ground. She appeared to prefer no one, but always to be equally pleased with all ; and whomsoever she laughed with to-day, had almost forgotten by the morrow. To those only whose guest she was did she evince a feeling, and this increased the general desire to elicit sentiment from the fair one.

I saw it was my policy to treat her as if I thought her not difficult to please, and I contrived to regain her confidence. The weather being most inviting she offered, on the afternoon before our departure, to walk with me into the country. I gladly assented, and we bent our steps towards the Modena road. We roamed beside barberry hedges, and under the shade of the acacia, blossoming with its white and odorous flowers. On either hand we beheld a country overflowing with vegetation. There, was the favourite lupin ; there, the pear and wild cherry, lending support to the vine, which, as it hung in festoons towards the earth, wafted the delicious perfume of its blossoms, giving promise of autumnal stores of the purple and yellow grape.

She had received me neither with the confidence of a relation, nor with the regard of former times ; this demeanour on her part led me to reflect on all that had happened since we had met. I suspected this reserve had reference to Giuditta, but I was willing to ascribe it to marriage, which changes the manners of woman.

We had communed on many topics—the days of Siena, her sister's and her own marriage among the rest, and then I trembled at what must follow—allusion to poor Giuditta ; and it was made in a manner which I was unprepared to expect.

“ You saw Angus at the villa Savatelli ?” she said.

“ I did,” replied I.

“ He has been here.”

“ His movements are very rapid indeed,” I observed.

“ He came to see me.”

“ Who would not do the same,” I rejoined, as the expression of her countenance recalled the image of Giuditta.

“ He came to make inquiry of me concerning my sister Giuditta. ‘ *Æthra*,’ said he, ‘ I hear she has become a Sister of Mercy—is it true ? I ask with much anxiety.’ I answered, ‘ I have not heard lately from home, but it is understood she has retired from the world owing to disappointed love.’ ”

Throughout this communication I suffered deeply; and inquired, “ Were there any further circumstances to be related ?”

“ Angus,” she replied, “ avowed a passion for Giuditta, but declared that he resigned his claim to you as worthier of her than himself.”

“ What followed,” said I, despairingly.

“ He said no more,” replied *Æthra*.

I had heard too much, and what I had heard I put by for solitary reflection, and for deep soul-diving repentance.

By some means I felt grateful to *Æthra* for sparing me further pain : she must have known all, why therefore did she not resent my conduct ? Yet what had I done ! No one knew how deep a meaning lived in the cathedral scene, directed less to Giuditta than to her friend ; and no one could blame me because Giuditta, as a Sister of Mercy, had twice watched during my insensibility at my pillow. Nevertheless, I was grateful to *Æthra* for sparing me, and I regarded her with all the love which the dear Giuditta, too late, had lighted up in my heart. She approached me with affection, which was unexpected, as undeserved : and with all this grateful feeling in myself I stayed not to examine what she felt, comforted beyond measure and supported by her sweet and soothing smiles, such smiles as her sister had vouchsafed me when she loved with hope ! The wild fires thus kindled by nature in our bosoms could not burn apart; like two flames, directing their spires towards each other, they almost became one.

THE STRANGERS.

BEING THE FIFTH CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR,
PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

BY JOSEPH ANTHONY, JUN.

And she indeed,
With her pale, virgin brow, and changeful cheek,
And the clear starlight of her serious eyes,
Lovely amidst the flowing of dark locks
And pallid binding flowers, was beautiful.

MRS. HEMANS.

"SHE is coming, sir," said the waiter, as he entered the room, rousing me from the reverie in which I had been indulging, whilst gazing on the red embers of the fire, for the time forgetting that I should soon have to quit my comfortable quarters for the night mail and a fifty-miles journey. Following the announcement, the blast of a horn and the distant clatter of horses' hoofs, borne on the wind through the silent streets, intimated the near approach of the conveyance by which I purposed journeying on to the ancient city of Hereford.

As I issued from the gateway of the hotel, the mail turned the corner by the old Town Hall, and with her lamps gleaming, like two fiery eyes, through the darkness, came rattling down the street at a pace which plainly indicated she was, indeed, behind her time. Rain was descending in torrents, and the wind, as it fitfully swept along, was keen and cutting, as though it came from a region of icebergs.

"Bad night for you, Robinson," said the horsekeeper, addressing the coachman, as that heavily-coated and dripping Jehu descended from the box. "And the road's uncommon heavy, I know," added the presiding genius of the stable, as his eyes rested on the mud-bespattered hides of the reeking team.

"Uncommon heavy," responded he of the whip, and adding some very brief but very emphatic anathemas on one of his wheelers, which he declared possessed a cast-iron mouth, and had nearly pulled his arms off, he disappeared under the gateway, no doubt to seek a refresher after his contest with "such a brute."

On taking my place, I found but one inside passenger. The surly tones of his voice, reproving the guard for not displaying more alacrity in closing the door after my entrance, at once checked any inclination which I might have entertained for entering into conversation with him, or to seek further knowledge of his humanity than the dim outline of his figure and the inharmonious tones of his voice afforded.

It seemed, however, we were to have more company.

Two individuals, who, under the gateway of the inn, had been apparently holding a parley with the landlord, with the assistance of the guard—for one of them was seemingly aged and feeble—took the two remaining inside places, whilst the burly Boniface, pitching his voice with some exertion above the roar of the blast, so as to be heard by the coachman, who had mounted the box, thus enlightened us as to the terms on which the new comers were admitted:—

"If you have any insides to take up, Robinson, the old man and the young woman must turn out, as they are only booked outside."

"Very well, sir," replied the husky voice of the whip. "Are you right there, Jem?"

"Right!" was the response from behind; and away we went through the dimly-lighted streets, away into the jaws of night, the rain beating furiously against the windows of the coach, and the wind-like voices of the spirits of darkness howling wildly around us.

The brief glance I had obtained of the last comers had been sufficient to indicate, that in the event of their having to turn out, according to the directions given, to them it would, indeed, be a very undesirable change; for, in addition to the age and feebleness of one of them, neither were provided with sufficient clothing to meet the fury of the night. We had not proceeded far, ere I gathered from their conversation that they were father and daughter. The latter appeared to be very assiduous in attending to her aged companion, addressing him in a low endearing tone of voice, which was remarkable for its sweetness; and I observed that she occasionally gave him from the small bag which she carried what I judged to be lozenges, and which he evidently had recourse to as an alleviation of a constant hacking cough with which he was afflicted.

From the circumstances attendant upon their entering the coach, I concluded they were in needy circumstances, whilst their language—revealing that in point of education they were much above the lower grades of life—led me to regard them as forming a portion of that, alas! numerous—shall I add unhappy—class! "the poor genteel."

As we proceeded on our journey, I endeavoured to draw the father into conversation. His distressing cough prevented him from conversing freely; the topics we discussed were of an ordinary character, yet, from the little he said, I felt a desire to hear more, and, indeed, insensibly became deeply interested in the two strangers. We had progressed some seven or eight miles on our journey, when the mail pulled up. I heard a voice without, and caught the word, "Inside," and throwing down the coach window, found that we were standing before the gateway of a lodge, where I observed a lady, closely muffled up, a box at her feet, and a servant, with a lantern, holding over her an umbrella, the rain still descending in torrents. The coach door, as I expected, was opened by the guard, who, addressing the booked outsiders, intimated that one of them must give place to the lady. The old man and his daughter rose from their seats together.

"I'll go, papa; indeed I will," said the latter.

"You must not, Emily—shall not," replied her companion, in a slightly authoritative tone. "I insist that —" His hacking cough came on again; he could not finish the sentence, but made an effort to pass her.

To this the daughter, who sat nearest the open door, whilst the gruff voice of the guard was urging them to be quick, replied hurriedly, and in an under tone, "My dear papa, it would be your death." And gently pushing him back to the seat from which he had risen, and folding her light cloak around her, she turned to descend the steps.

Whilst this brief and hasty dialogue was passing, I drew my winter dread-nought from the seat which I occupied, and interposing myself between

the last speaker and the door, in a few words intimated that there was no necessity for her to quit the inside of the coach. And, to be brief, ere she could recover from her surprise, my place was taken by the new comer, I had mounted the box-seat, and we were off again, and away through the black hurricane.

It was, indeed, a fearful night; the rain came down with unusual violence, whilst the wind, in its bitter cold, cut most severely. Enveloped, however, in my huge coat—the hero of a hundred storms—I cared but little for the angry elements, and soon fell into a speculating reverie on the probable fortunes, trials, and fate of my late companions.

My inquiries, addressed to the coachman, respecting them, elicited little beyond that which I already knew. They were utter strangers to him, and were booked to a small town situated som^e fifteen miles short of my own place of destination—Hereford.

I must confess that I was not a little pleased when we arrived at —. Dripping as though I had emerged from the bed of a river, I descended from my seat whilst the change of horses took place, to obtain some refreshment in the hotel. Although desirous of learning something more about the interesting couple of the inside of the coach, I was at the same time anxious to escape the acknowledgment which, I did not doubt, with the opportunity, would be tendered by the invalid and his companion, and with this intent, hastily entered the inn ere they had quitted the coach, concluding that they would have taken their departure when I should again issue forth. To insure this, if possible, I lingered in the bar, sipping my negus, until the coachman's "Now then, sir," twice repeated, apprised me that it was full time to depart. I soon discovered that my object was to be frustrated. Standing by the hotel door, evidently awaiting my coming, my eyes fell upon my late companions—the old man and his daughter. The lamp over the doorway revealed to me in the one an aged and careworn visage; the other—ah! the recollection of that countenance, so sad, though young, so sweet, so full of spiritual light, so beautiful—teaches me that little less than profanity would be the endeavour to describe it. Did angels in these days descend from realms above to irradiate our sphere, I could believe it had been mine to gaze on the beauty of immortality.*

I will not repeat the language which the old gentleman—for such, though a broken-down one, he evidently was—addressed to me in acknowledging what he termed my good-nature. There was not only a warmth, but an ineffable grace in the manner with which he requested to shake me by the hand in parting; whilst his fair and delicate-looking companion, with an expression of countenance more eloquent than words, paid me a thousand times over for the little piece of consideration I had shown.

Reader, though very brief and hurried, our parting was more like the separation of old friends than that of strangers; and so much had my sympathy in their behalf been awakened, that I pursued my journey oppressed with a feeling of sadness, which, for some time, I found impossible to dispel. I never was, and trust I never shall be, one of those who can from smooth waters look unmoved on their fellows buffeting with the storm, and who regard with indifference the struggles against the tide of an adverse fate—of a wearied, and, perhaps, breaking spirit. Such unmoved spectators are not to be envied. They would reduce the scene

of human life to a vast arena, make us all gladiators battling with each other, where the vanquished in the fight would fall, alas! ever unbefriended, unpitied, and unwept.

In the midst of active pursuits, rapid change of scene, and other incidents, the circumstances which I have here related had passed away from my thoughts, to be, however, again recalled to my recollection, and all my former interest in the strangers awakened, on my again visiting — some months afterwards. Recalling to memory my meeting with the aged invalid and his interesting daughter, and influenced by a strong desire to see them again, and to learn something of their history, I decided upon tarrying a summer's day in — for that purpose, as well as to enjoy a ramble through its beautiful suburb scenery, of which I had heard high praise.

Since my last visit there had been a great change in the occupancy of the hotel at —. Excepting the head boots—or “top boots,” as the well-worn stock wit of an inn so frequently designates him—who continued with the new landlord of the old “régime,” not one beside remained. This useful functionary being, therefore, the only one from whom I could expect to gain any information on the subject in which I was so much interested, after supper I summoned him to my presence to make inquiries respecting the old gentleman and his daughter, and to ascertain from him the necessary particulars to guide me in my contemplated proceedings of the morrow.

To do but simple justice to the qualifications and attainments of the race of “boots” of hotels in large towns, generally speaking they are very sharp, very clever, and very useful fellows. In the country, however, one of the genus deserving such a character might safely be pronounced a very remarkable exception to the rule. A slouching, heavy gait, slowness of apprehension, a dull eye, and a drawling speech, characterise the country “boots,” and a choice specimen of his class was the genius of the blacking-bottle, who did the spiriting

From leather soiled and dim,
To polish sparkling bright,

for the Royal Oak at —.

True, the names of the individuals of whom I sought intelligence I knew not, but amongst so small a gathering of humanity as vegetated in the place, I little doubted that my description of the parties I sought would enable the sage I consulted to put me on their track. He had, however, not the most remote knowledge of such persons as I described; he didn't know, he said, but he didn't think that there were any such people at that time in the town. I was about to dismiss him, satisfied that it would be useless to question him further, when a new thought struck me.

“Can you remember,” said I, “about four months ago, Robinson, who was driving the down mail, coming in one rough night, and flinging his ‘sou'-wester,’ wringing wet, into old Charley, the horsekeeper's face?”

This circumstance occurred to me at the moment, it having caused a loud “guffaw,” on the night I alluded to, amongst the few loungers who had gathered under the gateway of the Royal Oak to see the mail come in; Robinson, be it observed, being an established droll fellow, and, as one of them at the time remarked, “always full of his fun.”

On this appeal to his recollection being made, "boots" paused, and looked up at the ceiling of the room with an expression almost ludicrous on his heavy features, as though the effort to carry back his memory a stretch of four months was no less difficult than novel to him. At length, with a gleam awakening in his sleepy eyes, and a laugh breaking around his capacious mouth, he replied that he "moinded" that night very well.

"Then," said I, quickly, desirous of not losing a moment lest his memory should break under the unusual strain, "you must recollect two passengers who came by the mail, an old man and a young girl, their luggage being a large box. Do you remember them, and who carried their luggage?"

I was fortunate in having fired the train of his rarely-exercised faculty of memory: he did recollect them now I mentioned it, and, what was more, had carried their box himself. Their names he had never heard; all that he remembered was, that he carried the luggage to Mrs. Wilson's, who lived beyond the church on the L—— road; he supposed they were lodgers of her'n, but he didn't know, as he never saw them before as he "know'd on," and he had never seen them since. Gratified to learn so much, after ascertaining further particulars relative to the distance and situation of Mrs. Wilson's, I dismissed Mr. "Boots," and soon after retired to rest, indulging in pleasing anticipations of the morrow.

That morrow came—rosy, bright, and beautiful. The month was June—leafy June. June, with its bright, sunshiny face; its sweet breathings from the fields; its music of soaring larks up in the tranquil sky; and hidden brooks singing their quiet tune. How delightful at such a time to throw open the casement of one's bedroom, and whilst the eye rests on the bright leaves, wet with dew, laughing in the sun in all their refreshing and inspiring greenery, to inhale the perfume of flowers, which one might deem was the incense of heaven wafted to earth in the breath of the young and rosy day!

With the description received from Mr. Boots, I had little difficulty in finding Mrs. Wilson's dwelling. Situated about half a mile from the town, it presented the appearance of a superior sort of cottage, with a good sized garden in front sloping to the road, from which the house lay some fifty paces or more. A more delightful situation could not easily be imagined. Whilst in front, rich in vegetable productions, fruits, and flowers, the garden spread its treasures to the eye; in the rear of the building, gradually rose a graceful swell of cultivated upland, crested with a clump of trees, suggestive on a summer's day of delightful shade, and a sweet spot for a rambler who, like myself, would seek the summit for the view which it evidently commanded of the beautiful valley and the little town of —, nestling within it. Looking from the front of the cottage, the eye was gratified with a fine sweep of undulating pastoral country, fringed in the far distance with a belt of deep forest-trees, from which abruptly rose a magnificent chain of dark mountains, whose high, bold, naked outline was distinctly seen marked on the horizon.

Partly covered with ivy, the cottage was also graced over the doorway with a fine honeysuckle, profuse in blossom, whose delicious perfume on my approach seemed to vie with the breathings of numberless roses, which twined around the lower windows of the dwelling. Such was the abode of Mrs. Wilson.

The cottage homes of England,
 By thousands on her plains,
 They are smiling o'er the silvery brooks,
 And round the hamlet fanes;
 Through glowing orchards forth they peep,
 Each from its nook of leaves,
 And fearless there they lowly sleep,
 As the birds beneath their eaves.

MRS. HEMANS.

The little servant girl who answered my knock at the door, ushered me into a small plainly-furnished room over-looking the garden, where I was soon joined by the mistress of the house, who, with some little surprise depicted in her countenance, was evidently a little puzzled to account for my calling upon her. * She was somewhat advanced in years, plainly and neatly attired, possessing, however, a strikingly benevolent expression of countenance, such as I have rarely looked upon. I may here observe that Mrs. Wilson was a widow, whose husband had been a tradesman in —. The limited means with which she had been left, induced her to take the cottage, letting out a part of it, which, with the produce of her garden, enabled her to float pretty smoothly down the stream of life.

The object of my visit was soon told. I described when and where I had met with the individuals I was in search of, the interest they had awakened in me in their behalf, and my earnest desire to see them again. It appeared afterwards, that Mrs. Wilson had been informed by her lodgers of the circumstances attendant upon our journeying together, and to the warm praise, which doubtless had accompanied the recital of the little service received from a stranger, I ascribed the kindness of manner and readiness on her part to give me all the intelligence she possessed respecting them. It was a brief history. They had occupied a part of her dwelling about two years; and about two months previous to my visit, Miss Emily, who, in the widow's language, had been ailing for some time, changed much for the worse; she had been compelled to relinquish her customary walks, her strength forsook her, and, carried off by a rapid decline, "she died," said Mrs. Wilson, bursting into tears at this part of her narrative; "she died, sir, one morning as May was going out, and she now lies in our churchyard."

The widow was considerably affected as she proceeded to inform me of the strength of affection that had existed between father and child; it seemed that he had sat for hours beside her up to the moment of her death, and ere her young and gentle spirit passed away, his name was the last utterance of her lips. She was buried under an elm-tree in the churchyard, with the simple inscription of her Christian name on the tombstone, and, after the burial, the old gentleman had left the place, Mrs. Wilson knew not whither. He had warmly expressed his gratitude to her for her kind attentions to his daughter, and, in answer to her inquiry when he was bidding her good-by, informed her that it was not his intention ever to return. Such was the intelligence conveyed to me at the widow's cottage; such was the result of my visit. I should meet them no more.

In the course of our conversation, Mrs. Wilson gave me further information respecting the strangers, which tended, if possible, to enhance the interest I had previously entertained; revealing, as it did, that clouds had

indeed spread o'er their sunshine, and to them that sunshine had never come again.

The former occupants of the widow's rooms having quitted them about two years ago, it appeared she had advertised them in the county papers, describing the situation, and the moderate terms; the result was an application by a Mr. Allanby, who, with his daughter, subsequently entered upon them. The old gentleman had frankly informed Mrs. Wilson, that, as well as the beauty and salubrity of the situation, the lowness of terms had considerably influenced his choice in taking the rooms.

"I am anything but a rich man, Mrs. Wilson," said he, "and we shall require but humble fare."

And at another time, when making the arrangements before the arrival of his young companion, he said,

"I shall require little or no attention myself, Mrs. Wilson, but to my daughter be attentive; nay, be kind to her"—a tear rose in his eye as he spoke—"for she is but delicate, and lowly in spirits; but your country air will, I hope and trust, soon bring her health and spirits again."

"From the first moment I saw Miss Emily," said the widow, "I took a great liking to her, and thought more of her each day as I became better acquainted with her sweet disposition; but until her death I knew not how much I loved her. She was so good natured, so sweet tempered, and ever endeavouring to appear cheerful, though so sad at heart. Before the old gentleman she was always so, and yet, poor thing! when he has been away on his lonely rambles, and she has been alone, I have heard her sobbing as though her heart would break. Her grief," continued Mrs. Wilson, "was, I think, principally on her father's account, for she once told me that he had suffered a heavy reverse of fortune, which had reduced him to the broken gentleman I beheld him."

Allanby, it appeared, was an assumed name. He had, in giving it to the widow, informed her that it was so, and that he had reasons for wishing his own name not to transpire. Mrs. Wilson gave me further particulars respecting the strangers, and most touching was the depth of feeling and simplicity combined whilst recounting the efforts which father and child had made to cheer each other, and to conceal the deep grief which they both endured.

With other information respecting them, Mrs. Wilson also informed me that, on the occasion of my meeting them, they had been a distant journey, although the place of their visit had not, to her, been mentioned.

From certain observations made by the old gentleman, the widow had reason to believe it had been something of a crisis in their fortunes, and that its result was disastrous. Ever after, Mr. Allanby appeared almost heart-crushed, and in spirit utterly prostrate; increased by the evident change for the worst in his daughter's health; and as she sank, and died, he became almost deranged in his grief.

"Oh! sir, she was so kind-hearted," said Mrs. Wilson, recurring to the ill-fated Emily, "she would sing and read to me for hours together. See—these are drawings of hers, which she gave me, and which are to me the dearest of treasures."

The widow drew from a drawer, where they were carefully laid and folded up in paper, a number of pencil sketches, possessing considerable merit. They bore also, in pencil, the signature of "Emily," and consisted of a series of views taken in the vicinity of the cottage.

One of them, which I have the happiness of possessing, presents the

prospect commanded from the front of the widow's dwelling, and which I have attempted to describe. The sketch, which I highly prize, is of singular fidelity and beauty, displaying, on the part of the ill-fated artist, very remarkable taste and ability.

As my gaze rested on these evidences of a cultivated mind, the pale, beautiful countenance that I had once seen passed again before me, I had learnt her sad history and her death together,—shall I hesitate to say that I shed a tear o'er the pencilled landscape on which I was gazing.

In the churchyard of —, beneath the wide-spreading branches of an elm-tree, may be seen a tombstone, bearing this simple inscription—“Emily.” A visitor of the town, who, like myself, might direct his steps to the rural and picturesque burying-place, would find it, amongst the mementos of the dead, to awaken his interest, and to excite his imagination.

The inquiries which he might be led to make of the old sexton on the subject, would, however, elicit but little information, although, in its meagreness, perhaps, calculated to add to the interest already awakened.

“She was a young girl who was a stranger in these parts. After she was buried here, her father, who people said had once been a real gentleman, left the place, and nobody knew anything about them, except widow Wilson, that they lodged with, and we buried her last Michaelmas.”

Such was the reply of the man of the mattock, as, on one of my visits to the churchyard, to look upon the lonely grave, I put the question to him as to its tenant, whilst he was busy preparing another last home beside it.

Reader, I have never visited that grave without shedding theron a tear, occasionally crossing the horny hand of the grave-digger with a coin, that I may find, on my next coming, the rank weeds overgrow it not in its lowliness, and that, in my own loved summer, fair flowers shall deck the tomb of Emily.

THE SKELETON IN ARMOUR.*

BY CAROLINE DE CRESPIGNY.

Thou “gaunt anatomy,”†—steel embraced!
 Walled round a living tomb!
 In gauntlets, greaves, and cuirass cased,
 My flesh creeps at thy doom!
 With casque unclosed and blood-red crest,
 Against thy dungeon backed,
 Thou barest thy broad and stalwart chest,
 Defying, grim, erect.
 There’s many a dint upon thy sword—
 A sword none now could wield;
 Thou mightst have been the castle’s lord,
 Save that in blank thy shield.

* “At the beginning of the last century, there was made at Handshuseim, near Heidelberg, an interesting discovery.—On descending a winding staircase, some one struck the wall, which gave out a hollow tone; this wall was broken open, and a niche appeared, and in it a knight in full armour. On exposure to the air the skeleton fell to pieces, and the armour with it. The helmet bore traces of gilding and sword-dints.”—*Von H. Schreiber.*

† Spenser.

Say, did that iron coffin once
 Enclose the heart and frame
 Of one of Baden's bravest sons,
 Though now without a name ?

Or wert thou, tell me, in thy time,
 Hired soldier, serf, or knight ?—
 Somefeat of heroism thy crime ?—
 Or deed that shunned the light ?

Wert thou a captive in the fight ?—
 A traitor at the gate ?
 Some jealous Castellaine's delight,
 And victim of her hate ?

Or daredst thou *more* than lift thy thought
 To thy lord's virtuous dame,
 And, for thy burning passion, bought
 This penance of her shame ?

Reveal ! how long that heart did beat,
 And gasp for air and breath,
 What hours, in that steel winding-sheet,
 And each a living death ?

Wert thou thy cruel foe's derision,
 Tortured by every taunt ?—
 Or racked thy soul by deep contrition ?—
 Or did thee nothing daunt ?

Silent ! a ruin, as thou art,
 I call upon these stones,
 Weod-overwaving, to impart
 Some record of thy bones !

In symbols told a mummy's story,
 Upon his pictured shell ;
 But mem'ries none, of shame or glory,
 Remain thy tale to tell.

Old Death's head, with thy ghastly grin,
 Best fitting such a hearse,
 No wonder all these walls within
 Is blighted by thy curse.

No marvel that the place is haunted—
 That from thy shattered wreck,
 To scare a soul, the most undaunted
 Heard nightly groan and shriek.

'Tis just that blood should call down blood*—
 That fallen on evil days,
 Should perish in a deadly feud,
 The last of an ill race.

Yet here, 'mid desolation's reign,
 Nature is beaute us still—
 Smiles rich with corn and wine the plain,
 Woods sheltering clothe the hill.

But, as these grass-grown courts I paced,
 And wove this idle rhyme,
 The "skeleton in armour" chased
 All charm from Handschuseim.†

* "The family to whom the castle belonged possessed it for 500 years. It became extinct in the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the last of the race was killed in single combat, in the market-place of Heidelberg, by a noble of Herschhorn."—*Von H. Schreiber.*

† Handschuseim means "Gauntlet Town."

PROFESSIONAL MEN.

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

No. II.

THE CLERGYMAN.

It should, indeed, be only after very deep and earnest consideration that a man should adopt the Church as a profession. There is something more needed than that he should satisfy himself he has sufficient qualifications to enable him to perform the duties of the ministry without halt or stumbling. I may not say, "the Church appears to me, from certain reasons, the profession in which I am most likely to succeed, in which I shall earn the best livelihood, and gain most distinction, and therefore will I embrace it." It is not in such a spirit that a man can lawfully assume the highest of professions. It is *done*: every day such motives prompt to the entering the Church, but I would not be that man who, merely because his uncle may be a bishop, or his grandfather patron of a living, at once rudely grasps a calling, his adoption of which is supposed to be, and emphatically should be, dictated only by a sure and certain feeling that he is in every way fitted for it, and by the presence of thoughts and emotions that unmistakeably point it out as his true and appropriate sphere of action. Conceive the mischief of having in the ministry a number of men who simply perform their duties for the purpose of obtaining a livelihood; who respect their profession, but who have no love for it; who did not choose it; who never would have chosen it; who acquiesced in the being placed in it because opposition would have involved family disputes; and because, while inclination and liking were not present, absolute aversion was absent, and there were considerations of respectability and emolument to which regard had to be paid. There can be no debate, I apprehend (and I am anxious now to speak with all calmness, and without shadow of disrespect),—I repeat, I imagine there can be no debate but that such men, and in numbers, we have in the ministry at this moment; men against whose lives rests no sort of charge; men of high honour, able, mayhap, and liberal and kind-hearted; but men who are satisfied with the performing their duties respectably; who go through them, not from love of them, but as a matter of course; who read prayers because it is their calling to read prayers; and who preach because it is a part of their profession to preach; but who do neither the one nor the other from the promptings of that high and lofty spirit, the swelling of that glorious and overpowering emotion, which the Church supposes to be within the breast of every man who has taken on himself to advocate her cause, to devote himself to her service, to live for her exaltation and extension, and, if need be, to die for her welfare and advancement.

I say, then, that I believe it to be a most unjustifiable act, the adoption of the ministry as a profession, without there be other motives inducing such a course than the impression that it will lead peculiarly to worldly advantage. The Church requires the presence of those other motives, and the entering the profession without them is an unholy and reprehensible proceeding.

But this is not all. A man may have the feeling of which I speak; he may be young, but yet have the wisdom of age; and he may really

look longingly to the arena opened by the Church as one in which he has all the inclination strongly and successfully to contend. And yet it may be that he cannot with propriety embrace this much-desired course of life. It may be that, with all the *will* to undertake it, there may be wanting the *power* required for the efficiently performing its duties. There may be wanting the mental power. It is no light subject to grapple with is theology ; it is no matter open to the meanest intellect, or to be comprehended by the slightest mental exertion. We may, indeed, know all that may be essential to our eternal salvation, and yet be but little learned in theology—little skilled in theological argument. But the clergyman, whose profession it is to deal with the mightiest mysteries, who will probably have among his congregation men and women of every grade of intellect, the puny and the powerful, and the mediocre—it may not be that he may be found unfitted for the task, if called upon to prove in clearest and most convincing manner the whole basis of his faith, and to assault and destroy all that cavillers and sceptics may bring against it to injure it. And the clergyman cannot do this, however sincere he may be in his profession, however much he may love it, and however learned he may be—he cannot discharge this terribly onerous and important duty unless his intellectual capabilities be as much above the common as is the subject which he has to handle above ordinary matters. It seems to me essential that a clergyman should be gifted above his fellows. We have infidelity on every side; broad unbelief and half-confessed doubts are widely prevalent. And wicked men, men who avow that they have no hope nor care regarding a future, are always wonderfully eager and subtle in argument ; 'tis desperation which makes them so, and they try to persuade themselves that that which their degradation asserts is that which their calm and collected reason approves and can justify. And these men require to be met and to be vanquished. Yes; but it is not every clergyman of the present day who can vanquish them; many there are who would not even venture to argue with them. And rightly so, for truth's champion would be the weaker ; and error, in skilful hands, even as a bad cause advocated by an able pleader, would in all probability come off victorious. This would be the result—a result chargeable against the practice of admitting men insufficiently intellectually gifted into the profession of the Church. Oh ! let a young man hesitate before entering the Church ; let him pause, and solemnly ask himself whether in every respect, without question and without doubt, he is fitted for the glorious but awfully responsible profession he is seeking to embrace.

And inasmuch as preaching forms a very important part of a minister's duties, a man is not qualified to become a minister unless qualified properly to preach. Preaching in the present day is almost useless. Some clergymen have the power but not the will to make an impression. It seems a serious thing to say, but I contend that a great number of clergymen do not take even *decent* pains to produce an effect. By this I mean, that they compose a sermon something after the fashion in which a cook would compose a stew ; there are certain ingredients ; these they mechanically take, and, having thrown them well together, and flavoured them with a few quotations from Scripture, lo ! the sermon is finished, and is served out to a most indifferent congregation with great gravity the next Sunday. Having enlarged on this point in an article which ap-

peared in this magazine some months ago, I do not purpose further dwelling upon it now; but I repeat, that this coldness is very disgusting in my sight, and I do hope that, from whatever motive it proceeds, it will be banished, and if sincerity be really in the preacher, his efforts will manifest it. The point upon which I now wish to fasten the reader's attention is, that while in many cases the failing to produce an impression is attributable to inertness, in some cases, even were this objection removed, and the minister to exert himself to the best of his power, there would still lack an effect on account of indisputable incapability to create it. It is not every man who can express himself with the clearness and force absolutely indispensable to the rendering his auditory a pleased and attentive one. And if he cannot accomplish this result, where lies the usefulness of his labours? What good accrues from the preaching of the greater number of our divines? The listening to a sermon, I say it openly, is, commonly speaking, a nuisance. The sermon is such a bungle from beginning to end, exhibiting so glaringly want of will or want of power, or both; showing so clearly that there really is either no inclination to make the vigorous effort necessary to the creating an impression, or that there is no knowledge how to make it; that it is painful—I repeat, it is painful—to listen to an ordinary discourse from the pulpit. Now this is a very sad, a very grievous circumstance. Here is an ordinance through which we are taught to believe, and we are most ready to believe, a vast amount of good might be wrought. Yet what is the fact? The benefit conferred by preaching at the present day I believe to be utterly insignificant. It is so lifeless, so lukewarm, so apathetic—it displays so little real, earnest, manful, resolute endeavour to achieve a result, or it exhibits so painfully the absence of qualifications for pulpit ministration, that, generally speaking, the sermon is a dark infliction and a dismal calamity. But what would be the case if no man ascended the pulpit not possessed of both undoubted power and undaunted determination to make an impression? What would be the case if, invariably, in the place of the feeble intellect there were the strong and mighty—in the place of involved argument and obscure diction, there were clear logic and perspicuous composition—in the place of a sleepy sing-song or a monotonous whine, there were the bold and energetic manner, the vigorous and yet attractive and graceful delivery? I say, what would be the case if this change were made? Should we have a congregation staring the one member at another, or at the windows, or at the ceiling? Should we have the thoughts directed to the counting-house, or the shop, or dwelling, or the evening entertainment fixed for the morrow, or the family gathering to-day? Nay, nay, this is so now—now, when there is the very strongest inclination to abstract one's attention from the mumbling that is going on in the pulpit, or, if the preacher be at all events audible, from the miserable bungle that he is exhibiting with so much self-complacency. I repeat, this may be so *now*, it would not be so *then*. It would not be so when the powerful orator exerted his mightiest energies, poured forth all his magnificent eloquence, strove with his utmost strength, called into requisition every art of which he should be the master, to win souls to Heaven. Oh, it may be so now—now, when the ordinance of preaching seems so little cared for that no encouraging hand seems ever to be held out to the possessor and exerter of eloquence, so that the brightest pulpit orator of this day—a man upon whose accents tens of thousands have tremblingly hung—a man who strives with an angel's

strength, and an angel's love, to advance the cause of Heaven—receives so little testimony from the rulers of the country to his peculiar powers, that actually the main avocation by which he gains his bread has been obtained through other qualifications. It *may* be so *now*, but it could *not* be so *then*. Then there would be produced on the delivery of every sermon, at all events, something of the effect invariably created by the gifted minister of whom I have been speaking. Then good, like unto that which he has done, would be worked on every Sunday, in every church, and in the arousing consciences that otherwise would have lain dormant, in the casting, so to speak, new light into hearts where nought had been for many a long year but darkness—darkness to be felt—in the sounding the alarm, and the awakening to danger, many and many an one who, in the absence of so vigorous a call, would have slept on till the miserably frail bark, having passed from the narrow stream of life, should have entered on the broad ocean of eternity;—in the effecting this great and glorious result would be manifested the incalculable benefit of that reform which is now so earnestly and emphatically required.

But there is another qualification we have to notice, which ought to be, but is not, considered indispensable to a candidate for holy orders. No man can become a soldier or a sailor who has lost an arm; no man should take upon himself the office of a clergyman, involving reading and preaching, who has no voice. An incapability to make himself heard beyond a few yards should really be considered a disqualification for holy orders. It might be very sad; the candidate might be in every other respect admirably fitted for the calling to which he should aspire; but still it would be so much *more* sad to inflict upon a congregation the evil of being ministered unto by a clergyman whose physical weakness would render his performance every Sunday little more than dumb show to the greater portion of his auditory, that I believe an objection raised on such a score would be perfectly legitimate, nay, undeniably laudable. You may go into many a large church at this time, and you may see a figure in a pulpit at a long distance, and, listening attentively, you may fancy you catch a murmur, you are not quite sure, but it may be so. However, as you suppose something must be going on, you presume that the faint sound you hear is the sermon, which the figure in the distance is delivering. You look around you. The portion of the congregation in pews in your immediate vicinity seem sleepy, a fearful number of "the poorer brethren" *are* asleep. And why not? The sleep will do them more good than the straining to hear a sermon which can *not* be heard. And this goes on Sunday after Sunday. People grumble; but to no purpose. My Lord So-and-So has nominated this reverend gentleman to this living, and in this living will the reverend gentleman remain for the rest of his existence; people may hear or may not hear; in regard to his staying or receiving his tithes, it will make no manner of difference. Now, I say that this ought not to be; that if, unfortunately, a man's lungs be so weak that the sound he emits is only audible at the very shortest distance, so that there is no church or chapel of the small dimensions that would suit his voice, that, in such case, the candidate for holy orders should not be admitted. And, moreover, every candidate received should, in reference to this point, be expressly informed, that when he should be hereafter appointed to minister in a church, should there be complaint on the part of any reasonable number of his congregation of his not being duly audible, and should such fact, after careful inquiry

and examination, be proved to impartial judges, that, in this event, whatever might be his other qualifications, or by whatsoever tenure in other respects he might hold his living, that he could *not* be suffered to remain in such living, for the very plain and simple, and, to the suffering portion of his congregation, most satisfactory reason, that he would not have the physical capability of performing properly its most important duties.

So that, briefly to recapitulate, we require four things in a candidate for holy orders. We want, in the first place, an earnest and hearty desire for the profession he seeks to adopt, a pure and profound love of the duties it is known to involve. We want, secondly, intellectual power to grasp vigorously and retain tenaciously all the deep mysteries of religion, all broad truths and subtle niceties, to deal with them without effort, and to exhibit and establish truth by arguments drawn from every source. We want, thirdly, the possession of more or less oratorical ability (and with the ability, the desire) of stating and proving propositions in such manner that the attentive cannot but be arrested and the mind convinced; and of so appealing to the feelings, that the heart will be touched and softened and overcome. We want, fourthly, the possession of a voice of sufficient compass to fill a church or chapel of ordinary dimensions. We think, that in the absence of any one of these four qualifications, the profession of the Church ought not to be chosen. There are plenty of men possessing them; the rendering them indispensable would by no means cause a scarcity of clergymen. The only result would be, that many able and gifted men who now keep aloof from the profession would be induced to enter it, and they would take the places hitherto in a sense so unworthily occupied. We entertain no hostility towards the clergy. We are anxious to give them our earnest support in every matter in which they may properly be supported; but we do require to see—we do hope to see—ay, and we will do all that we possibly can do to bring about—a great and important reform in the points upon which we have been remarking.

And now one word in regard to the emoluments of the Church. We do not consider them excessive at the present time. We do not consider it fair or just that you should pay a man who, from the nature of his office, is supposed to do you a greater benefit than could any other functionary, a smaller amount than you would regard as a recompense for the advantage conferred on you by such latter personage. Many men who entirely assent to the remunerating a judge with five thousand a year, think it monstrous that a bishop should receive the same amount; and they mutter something about the Apostles having been poor men, and possessed of little worldly goods. It is a most unfair argument. They *were* poor men, but their being poor was not indicative of their piety or virtue, even as, had they been rich, riches could not on that account be regarded as indissolubly connected with religion and uprightness. I do not see any other light in which we can properly view the matter of recompense to a clergyman than this. In ordinary concerns I pay in proportion to my receipt. I give unto my labourer according to the worth of his services, and the clever and the skilful in consequence receives much more than the slow and inexperienced. I pay unto this man and that man in proportion as I am advantaged by their toil. And why not apply the same rule in the remunerating clergymen? A minister who does his duty deserves at my hands a lofty recompense; than the office of a clergyman there is no higher—no higher, because none capable of conferring greater—nay, none which may bestow so great advantage upon the mass

of mankind. And if this be so, is it not a most mean and paltry proposition to pay the Church in a measure that would be deemed most scant and niggard if dealt to any other profession? Let us, indeed, require much of our clergymen—much more than we get at present; but do not let it be said that so lightly do we hold religion, that they who are in it our assistants and our guides, who aid us in health, who comfort us in sickness, who cheer us in death, and attend us at the tomb—do not allow it to be said that we are content to let these men live in comparative poverty and privation, upon the insulting pretext that their souls should be so wrapt in the contemplation of Heaven that their bodies should be disregarded of all earthly comfort and enjoyment.

But in connexion with the emoluments of the Church there is a point (I am sorry it comes last for observation) upon which I must, in conclusion, say a few words. I would speak of the salaries commonly paid to curates. It is a sore point, often remarked on before, and therefore I shall not dwell upon it, but I cannot entirely pass it over. We all know that it is a very common thing for a minister of a parish—in the country the case is often frightfully glaring—to pay to a curate, who performs nearly the whole of the duty, something less than would be paid to a West-end butler. Since such a great outcry was made in this matter, curates' berths may have looked up a little; but there is still immense reason to complain. One really could hardly have conceived it possible that a clergyman—a man supposed to be just, liberal, and kind-hearted, disposed to give everybody their due, to act honestly and honourably with all men, to do unto others as he would they should do unto him; it had been scarcely possible, I say, to conceive that a man, concerning whom one would have been bound to hold such expectations, could have been guilty of the monstrous, abominable, and scandalous injustice exhibited by so many clergymen in their treatment of their curates. Let the Church see well to this cause of complaint. Oh! she has no need to give handles to her enemies, for they are many and mighty. Yet, if she display herself as she should before the world; if she show every disposition to reform those things in her which are amiss; if she put herself forward, in no boasting attitude, in no haughty fashion, frowning down upon the multitude, treating them with scorn, and exciting their anger and reproach, but as a guardian and preserver, as an enemy to the persecutor and protector to the oppressed, as a lover of peace and a banisher of strife, as an untiring attendant for good through life and at death—oh! in such case, there is nothing to fear for the Church of England. They who are resolute against all the reform which she needs, who scowl at those who love her quite as much, and who would support her quite as ardently, but who will not shut their eyes to things wherein she is open to blame, even as a father will not pass over in silence the faults of his children—these men may talk and may preach of danger, but there is no cause for apprehension. There is a call for exertion, a call for the putting aside every hindrance to effort, a call for the cleansing from soil and from stain. There is no cry for destruction, no whisper of injury. She is in the hearts of the people still—not as warmly as she was, but that has been her own fault—but the people have NOT deserted her; and if she do not desert them, if she rouse and bestir herself as becomes her in these dark and perilous times, she will be held safe and secure from all her adversaries, her will being submitted to, her commands obeyed, her desires carried out, and she will sit in triumph complete and lasting.

WORDSWORTH'S "PRELUDE."*

A work like this, published so soon after the demise of its author, cannot be approached but with feelings of reverence, somewhat akin to what we should experience on contemplating the simple marble slab and brief inscription which now mark the spot where repose the mortal remains of the poet. His mind he long ago freely gave to the world; and this last posthumous work may fairly be looked upon as its author's best and most appropriate legacy—an auto-biography written in the language most familiar to him; and the growth of a mind whose development must be a history, treasured alike by poet and by philosopher.

William Wordsworth has been justly designated as the greatest of the metaphysical poets. Poetry was with him the early and almost the sole business of life. His attempt to substitute the humblest subjects and most simple language, for the fine fabric of poetic diction which had been in use for generations of the tuneful tribe, was at first but sparingly appreciated, and, in many instances, assailed with ridicule. It indicated, however, at once power and originality, for none but one strong in the subject-matter, and having faith in its simple enunciation, could have ventured on such an experiment. An exhaustless vein of pure and exalted description and meditation ensured success. Wordsworth's greatest poem, "The Excursion," contained passages of sentiment, description, and pure eloquence, not excelled by any living poet, while its spirit of enlightened humanity and Christian benevolence—extending over all ranks of sentient and animated being—imparted to that noble poem a peculiarly sacred and elevated character. It is now admitted, by all qualified to give an opinion, that the influence of Wordsworth on the poetry of his age has been as beneficial as extensive. "He has turned the public taste from pompous inanity to the study of man and nature; he has banished the false and exaggerated style of character and emotion, which even the genius of Byron stooped to imitate; and he has enlisted the sensibilities and sympathies of his intellectual brethren in favour of the most expansive and kindly philanthropy." The pleasures and graces of his muse, always simple and pure, are lastingly enshrined in a work of which Coleridge once said—

An Orphic tale indeed—

A tale divine of high and passionate thoughts,
To their own music chanted.

Commenced half a century ago, and reserved by its author for posthumous publication, it truly records the progress of the author's mind—the self-consciousness of power, and of a poet's mission—and the first attempts at interpreting nature, from his own native impulses:—

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
Much favoured in my birthplace, and no less
In that beloved Vale to which ere long
We were transplanted—there were we let loose
For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
Ten birthdays, when among the mountain slopes
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung
To range the open heights where woodcocks run
Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,

* The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind; an Auto-biographical Poem. By William Wordsworth. Edward Moxon.

Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
 That anxious visitation;—moon and stars
 Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
 And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
 That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befel
 In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
 O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
 Which was the captive of another's toil
 Became my prey; and when the deed was done
 I heard among the solitary hills
 Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
 Of undistinguishable motion, steps
 Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

A finely-told incident of poetic boyhood reveals the inner man more than pages of prose could do:—

One summer evening (led by her) I found
 A little boat tied to a willow tree
 Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
 Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
 Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
 And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
 Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
 Leaving behind her still, on either side,
 Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
 Until they melted all into one track
 Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
 Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
 With an unswerving line, I fix my view
 Upon the sununit of a craggy ridge,
 The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
 Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
 She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
 I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
 And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
 Went heaving through the water like a swan;
 When, from behind that craggy steep till then
 The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
 As if with voluntary power instinct
 Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
 And growing still in stature the grim shape
 Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
 For so it seemed, with purpose of its own,
 And measured motion like a living thing,
 Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
 And through the silent water stole my way
 Back to the covert of the willow tree;
 There in her mooring-place I left my bark,—
 And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
 And serious mood; but after I had seen
 That spectacle, for many days, my brain
 Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
 Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
 There hung a darkness, call it solitude
 Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
 Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
 Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
 But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
 Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
 By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

We need not say what more the "Prelude" contains: indoor and outdoor recreations—school-time—college—travel—the metropolis—the topics of the day; for this history of the growth of a poet's mind will have been before this in the hands of all who are loyal in literature and in poetry.

THE HUGUENOTS DAUGHTER.

Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.

I.

THE green hills and sweet valleys of "la belle France" no more resounded with the echoing blasts of war. The earth smiled again, as if at its glad release from the fiends of strife. The sanguinary leader of the Catholic bands, exhausted by the merciless massacre of thousands of the hated name of Huguenot, ceased from shedding innocent blood—the blood of kinsmen and countrymen—which cried for Heaven's vengeance from the ground. With returning peace, rejoicing to efface the remembrance of those dreadful events which had so sinfully blotted the beauteous face of their land, the young men and maidens of the hamlets, seeming to vie with the gladness of nature around them, devoted the hours to love and amusement.

But it was in a little village overshadowed by high rocks, forming a kind of natural barrier to its native loveliness, that some of the happiest of these hours were passed. For it was a vintage feast, in the lovely month of August, and the chaste lustre of the harvest-moon gave to the flowers and foliage a softer grace and purer beauty. There may be fine but never was seen a more genuine rural *fête*. Group after group of the happy vintagers assemble under the shelter of the green trees to enjoy the cool of the evening; the light forms of the young village maidens flitting to and fro in the bright moonlight, seeming like the festival of some fairy court. There is ample room for all. What so pretty as meadows and banks for seats? What merriment was there! What a vintage! The happy dancers keeping time to the joyous thrill of a world of music. But who now appears so potent a magician as to add to the rapture of the scene? Yet such is the effect of that graceful form seen advancing towards the group. She is hailed with greetings from all—with raptured sounds of applause. Joy! joy! it is she—the queen of all hearts. It is Mariette!

What avails it to descant on beauty and perfection, when every voice proclaimed her loveliest of the lovely. She, too, joined the merry maze, and many a maiden's heart beat with suppressed chagrin as the eyes of all were bent in admiration on the gliding, graceful form of the half proud, half innocently conscious beauty, as, aware of their regards, she trips it with added grace. What wonder, then, that, with so much adoration, so much homage, if sweet Mariette was becoming something of a coquette—an innocent, rural one, to be sure, but still a coquette. Many were the admonitions of the old dames and dowager queens of the village; but a kiss and a hearty laugh were the peace-offering of the heedless little beauty. Still, there was a depth of feeling beneath these flashes, as a skilful physiognomist might have learnt from the soft lustre of her dark eye. Even this festive morning a slight shade of sadness might be detected on her fair brow, betraying to a nice observer some uneasiness of the secret heart. But it was for an instant only, that earnest, melancholy glance, and flies like soft April drops before the fresh outbreaking sun. Victor is not yet there—he, the handsomest, the best; and what to her was the presence of all others!

How eagerly do the admiring youths press forward to obtain the happy privilege of her hand for the dance. Who will be the envied conqueror to claim the kiss of victory? for that is the reward promised to him who can weary his fair partner in the dance. But they have a poor chance with the fairy-footed Mariette.

A young man of gay and handsome, but bold and haughty bearing takes her hand. She is piqued at his brusque and boastful air, and remains cold and silent. On they whirl with the buoyant crowd, but she is determined not to be conquered; and, irritated and confused more than actually wearied, François is compelled to surrender; he is defeated. Another begs her hand. She turns; it is the graceful bearing, the winning tone of Victor. His earnest eyes are fixed entreatingly upon her. Could she refuse? Ah, no! and she was again led off—this time, how willingly! “Do they not seem made for each other?” whispered some; “both so animated, so graceful.” But she is sooner wearied than before. Her colour changes; she gives it up, and her blushing cheek is turned towards Victor. He claims the promised kiss.

Jealousy rankles in the bosom of the defeated lover. Dark thoughts, “cruel as the grave,” are in his heart at sight of that kiss, so willingly received, so warmly bestowed. Light and love, death and darkness—earful contrast! Could François, the rich, the powerful, admired and courted, brook indifference? disdain the preference, too, given to a poor peasant? From that moment they were rivals.

MARIETTE was the daughter of a Huguenot. The darling of her widowed mother, for well did Mariette, with her gentle care, repay the fond affection of her beloved parent.

And Victor, the brave, the good, worthy even of Mariette's love, who was he? Alas! he was, like themselves, poor; yet, tried ability and noble daring seem, in a young soldier, happy prognostics of success. Though loving Mariette devotedly, his generous heart would not brook the idea of asking her to share his humble lot. She, the gifted, the beautiful—to cast one shadow on her joyous youth. It was impossible! Yet, oh! how often beat his strong heart with emotion, while, least of all around her, his lips dared to avow that which his too eloquent silence, proceeding from the very intensity and generosity of his affection, so plainly betrayed to the eye of a rival; yet poor Mariette feared it denoted that he loved her not. And now, when upon the eve of leaving her, what contending feelings agitated his bosom! Should another, nobler born, richer, in his absence seek to win her love; she was free; perhaps would give power and splendour the preference. Then again, he could not—would not believe she would forget him so soon, ere he once returned. Then, would not he, too, be richer?—could not he, too, honourably seek her as his bride? Hope smiled in the distance: that one beam illumined his path, enabling him to bear like a hero, as he could, afflictions’ “fond and last adieu.” Yes, it was said; and Victor gladdened the eyes of old and young no more. There was sorrow for poor Mariette; but great joy filled the exulting heart of François.

His rival, the hated Victor, was absent now. He would take all pains

so to improve that absence, as to make his return still more bitter to him than the parting hour.

With a smooth-gliding, serpentine guile, and studied ~~in~~-ness, hidden only to make it the more dangerous, under an apparent most ingenuous exterior, he gradually won the confidence of the most scrupulous ; and that once obtained, he hesitated not, where his own interest was concerned, to betray the trust reposed. Thus, his manners became most finely modulated to chime in with Mariette's sorrowing mood. He affected to participate in it, with an inimitable air of sympathy. She had never before felt so cordially inclined towards him. He was kind—the perfection of unobtrusive and friendly attention—his all-sufficient recompence, the hope of mitigating *her* chagrin.

Excursions proposed, entertainments devised, all were his doing, and for her. But by degrees the mask was worn less cautiously, as he beheld with satisfaction the effects of his machinations. Mariette's innocent nature believed the beguiler to be what he appeared—kind and generous. He was so happy to behold her bright smiles and animated spirits, when participating in one of the little amusements he had prepared for her; and the remembrance of the imagined wrong she had done him, by her hitherto unfavourable opinion, added to this feeling. He had already won her esteem, her gratitude. Would not her affection soon follow? No; there he was mistaken. He spoke of love; but she was surprised, indignant, and told him that she “never, never,” repeating the word emphatically, “would be his.” A second time defeated, scorned. Would he endure it? Then he remembered his rival; and henceforth he swore that his only thought should be revenge. If she persisted in refusing him, let the penalty fall upon her own head.

III.

In the apartment of an humble cottage, a fair girl sat watching the slumbers of her sick parent. She appeared solitary and sad, for, as she rested her head upon her hand, the tears were stealing through those slender fingers. All around told of poverty. Yet the flowers, tended with so much care, are blooming and fragrant still, while she, the sweetest of them all, the beautiful Mariette, is neglected and lonely. What a contrast! She who was so caressed and beloved by all, for whom the youths of the village would gladly once have risked their lives, all now flee from her, as though there were a pestilence in the atmosphere of her bright and youthful beauty. Slander had spread abroad: how quickly, on the wings of envy and malice!

In those days great was the superstitious terror of the Evil One, strange as it may now sound; and she, the pure, the virtuous, was malignantly stigmatised as having entered into a compact with the powers of darkness. There was, in truth, a witchery in her charms, of which all had felt the power; and to crown the withering malice, even this was said to be the effect of some evil compact. Her flowers, her garden, with the innocent means of her industry, throve better than those of her neighbours; and this was additional proof of her intimate acquaintance with the black art. The poor Huguenot's daughter was despised and persecuted.

Victor, too; was it so? Had he, perhaps, forgotten *her*. It was im-

possible, she thought; and her last, only hope, she cannot, she will not relinquish, that his heart is still faithful, fond as her own.

Musing one day in this mood, she unconsciously pronounced his name, when her mothaving suddenly awakened, with the querulous irritation of infirmity, exclaimed,

"Why, Mariette, do you distress your poor sick parent, thinking still of that ungrateful Victor? Child, do not give way to such folly; he has long since, no doubt, forgotten you. All have done so now, except, indeed, François, who is kind and good" (here poor Mariette shuddered). "It is not right for you to scorn him as you do; he loves you, and would be our support and protection—a protection, indeed! for he is rich and powerful. Promise me to be his."

"Oh! dear mother, spare me, anything but that will I do for you. I know we are poor, but I will work day and night for you if need be. Do not fear. I am young and strong. There is hope of better things for us. Remember, dear mother, our Saviour's declaration, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; yet He will never leave or forsake those who trust in Him. That alone is the hope that maketh no ashamed.'

The complaints of her parent, the persecution, for such was to her the increasing endeavours of François to gain her love—labour, care, all this had poor Mariette to endure; but her piety and hope strengthened her to bear all the "pelting of the pitiless storm."

With mingled hope and fear, that filling of the heart with the varied softening recollections which are awakened in the breast of one returning to the land associated with the happy memories of home and love, Victor again returns after the absence of years to his native village. His hopes of advancement are realised. He has obtained that preferment and success his merit had deserved. He is respected and honoured by all: yet sadness predominates in the conflicting feelings which overpower his heart. Perhaps it is superstitious weakness, but the village, he thinks, bears a neglected and melancholy appearance. Even the trees and shrubs seemed no longer to wear the brightness of their former hues in his eyes. He is approaching nearer and nearer. Each winding of the road presents some well-remembered object; but what means that uproar and tumult which sounds harshly and discordantly upon his ears? Cries of terror and shrieks for help fill his heart with dismay. Suddenly the cause is explained. On approaching nearer, he sees the flames illuminating the skies in a canopy of fire, while the cries of "Burn them! burn them! Turn them out! Send the bewitched Huguenots from among us and we shall prosper!" tell him that it is the fearful work of the deluded populace.

Amid that cluster of cottages is the dwelling of his Mariette; nearer, he distinguishes that theirs is the seat of the flames. Gracious Heavens! what could it mean? He rushes forward, notwithstanding the cautions of the bystanders, wildly through the crowd, regardless of the scorching fire, the confusing clouds of smoke. He ascends the tottering staircase in desperation to seek and save Mariette: but oh! the dreadful thought that he was too late smote upon his heart, as, clasping her pale mute form in his arms, he descends and reaches the earth in safety.

"Stay," he cries, "miscreants, wretches, and stop your work of blood!"

The noble bearing of the young soldier, his commanding aspect and address, arrested for a moment even the savage ferocity of fanatical hate, and the crowd shrank back with the same cowardice which h^d first dictated the attack. But he heeds them not. He is gazing with gratitude and delight, for now heavenly love is springing in his heart at the returning consciousness of his Mariette. Oh! see, she greets him with a smile of love, and such a smile—when suddenly bursting in haste through the people, his rival appears, the despoiler of his love's peace, François.

"Victor again!" exclaimed he, "my evil genius; it is too much. What! you have saved her, too, and that should have been my office; but I have saved a life dear to her as her own, her mother's, and for that at least I claim her gratitude," he added, with bitterness.

"François, you are unjust," exclaimed the generous Victor; "in what have I wronged you? Is it my fault that we both love her! But she is free. I will be to her only what she wishes—her friend, her brother—can I say more?"

"Oh, all, then,—Mariette, whom do you love?" asked François, overcome by his generosity; "that must decide our fate."

"Victor only, Victor ever!" murmured Mariette, as her lover fondly embraced her.

"Wherefore, then, our felicity, François?" said Victor; "will you not be our friend?"

"Yes! generous, noble Victor, I will be that friend; as firm, I trust, and faithful a friend as I have been cruel and persecuting an enemy. Mariette and the power of goodness has triumphed. I am no longer a demon. I cannot resist your noble nature which has softened my relentless one. But oh!" he exclaimed, with the remorse which a generous forgiveness rarely fails to awaken in one who feels himself unworthy of it, "could you forgive me did you know the injury I have done, the misery I have caused you both. Men," he cried, "you whom I have deceived and fed in your delusions, it is fit that I should have the humiliation of confessing my base conduct before you. It is I who have raised the vile calumny against that pure and spotless creature—I who fomented hate and discord. It is false, false as the accusation, as the evil heart which propagated it. I alone am miserably guilty."

Hot and bitter tears, tears of penitence and shame, wrung from the proud François, attested the truth of that strange confession, as on bended knees he entreated the forgiveness of both. It was already granted by the happy lovers. Who shall describe their joy, the rapture, which love such as theirs bestows? Heaven smiled upon it.

François was true to his word. His works gave evidence meet for repentance; and soon the whole village, inspired by the happy revolution in his breast, or in gratitude for their deeds of love and benevolence, learned to bless the names of Mariette and Victor.

END OF VOL. XVIII.

